MANGA REVA

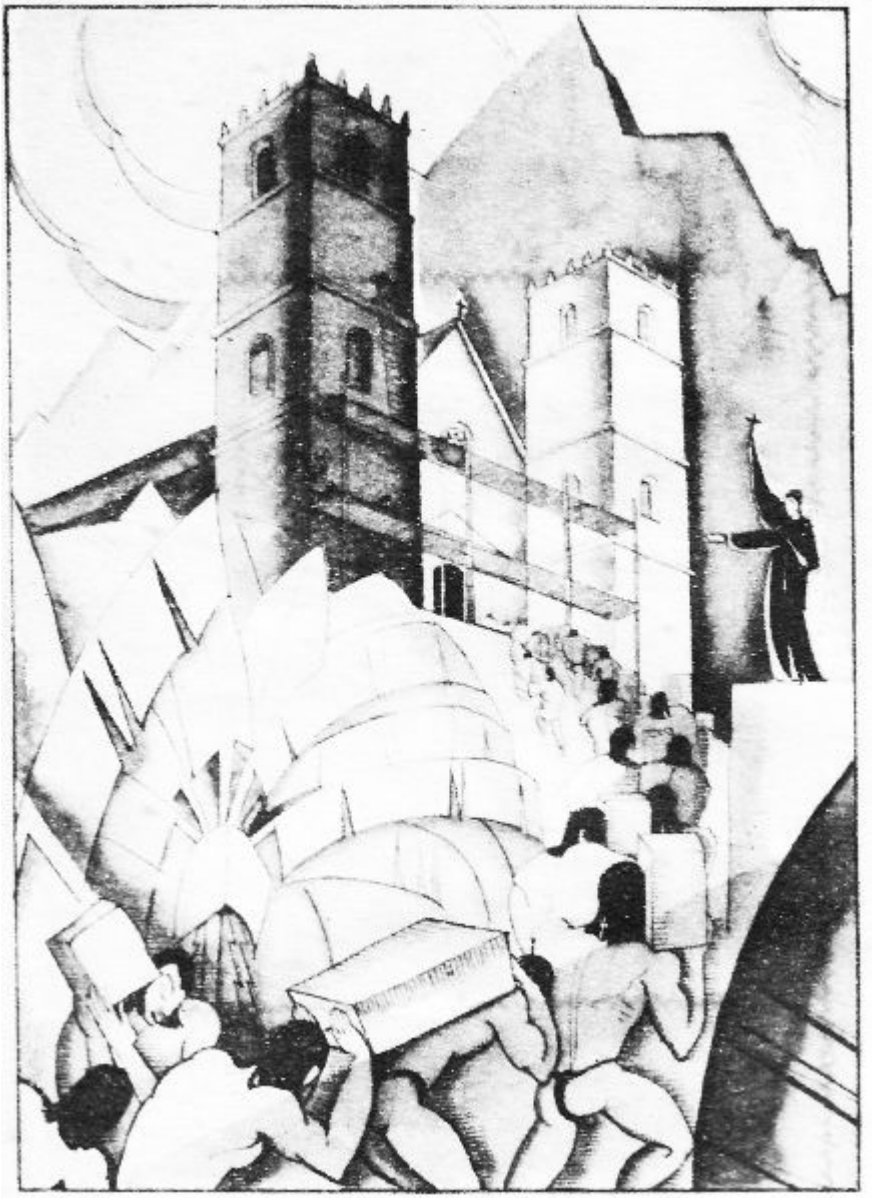
The Forgotten Islands

by

ROBERT LEE ESKRIDGE

Mysteries of the "Forgotten Islands"

revealed by a wandering American painter during his sojourn in French Oceania



The cathedral was finished at last

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ROBERT LEE ESKRIDGE

With illustrations by the author

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To
My Mother
and to
Anna Hamill Monroe
Barrett Kiesling *and* Henry Kitchell Webster

Contents

An Introduction To Robert Lee Eskridge
CHAPTER I; I SET SAIL
CHAPTER II; THE NATIVE WAY OF LIVING
CHAPTER III; THE LOST CONTINENT
CHAPTER IV; HONORÉ LAVAL, THE MAD PRIEST
CHAPTER V; of GHOSTS and MAGIC
CHAPTER VI; CANNIBAL KINGS
EPILOGUE

Illustrations

The cathedral was finished at last

Village Life

It literally rained fish

Nanon brought up one medium-sized shell

The destruction of Lemuria

The king's daughter went to him and throwing her arms about his stiffened and horrified form resoundingly kissed him

The destruction of Tu

He quietly advanced toward me, fixing me with the most extraordinary eyes I have ever seen

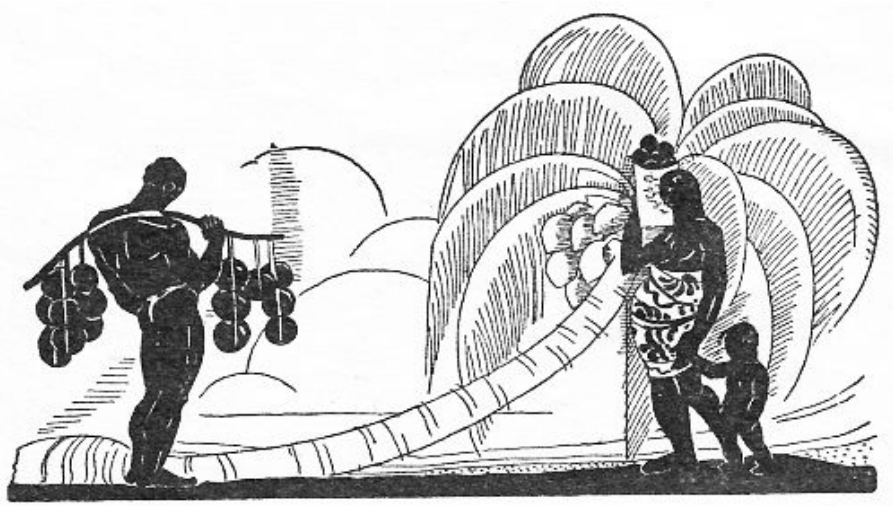
He steered his canoe to the deepest part of the lagoon, and there dropped the gods one by one into the inscrutable cerulean depths

The corpse was tied to the upright stone which you see at every *maraë*

In the black velvet depths of the open cook-house we saw a dimly outlined shape like a man

Then suddenly he heard voices all around him

Slowly the "Thing made with cords" picked up, one by one, the bones and played with them



An Introduction to Robert Lee Eskridge

I FIRST MET Robert Lee Eskridge in Hawaii in mid-summer, 1932, and commenced to drop by his rustic, tree-pierced studio along the seawall of Kapiolani Park. He had recently arrived in the islands for the first time, and was in his forty-first year, whereas I was in my twenty-first. I could not have imagined that more than half a century later, in the summer of 1986, I would be en joying my tenth year of marriage to the grand lady who was his devoted helpmate for a few months short of twenty years. Nor could I have possibly foreseen that I would participate in publishing this long-overdue reprint of his brilliant book *Manga Reva*. Few things in my life have given me as much pleasure as this role in expanding the Eskridge legend and giving him a well-merited boost toward an assured place in the-continuum of immortal authors and author-artists who preceded him in Polynesia during the latter half of the nineteenth century such as Herman Melville, Nicholas Chevalier, Captain Charles Nordhoff, Pierre Loti, Robert Louis Stevenson, Louis Becke, John LaFarge, and Henry Adams-as well as of the galaxy of South Sea notables of our own century.

Eskridge arrived in Papeete aboard the venerable S.S. *Makura* early in 1927, on the first of four excursions to Tahiti and various outposts of French Oceania. This was twenty-four years after Paul Gauguin; twenty years after Jack and Charmian London arrived there in the *Snark*; and well within the era of the great ethnologist-linguist John Francis Stimson, Charles Nordhoff, James Norman Hall, Robert Dean Frisbie, George Biddle, and clergyman-novelist Robert Keable (who had achieved fame through his best-seller *Simon Called Peter*). Intimate of all these but Stimson (whose Polynesian researches from 1912 to 1952 were carried on mostly on remote islands on different courses than his), Eskridge was to know him and his distinguished colleagues Sir Peter Buck, John .G. Stokes, and E. S. Craighill-Handy during his Honolulu years.

This quintessential colorist, craftsman, and master of composition and perspective studied under Robert Henri and Andre L'Hote, as well as with Brazil's greatest twentieth-century painter and etcher, Candide Portinari. He executed hundreds of brilliant landscapes, portraits, and murals, and it is small wonder that many critics seriously dubbed Eskridge "The Gauguin of Hawaii."

Contemporary of nearly every outstanding artist of Hawaii's pre-Herb Kane/Rocky Jensen Era, Eskridge was an intimate also of D. H. Hitchcock, Madge Tennent, Juliette Mae Fraser, Isami Doi, Reuben Tam, Hue Lucquiens, John M. Kelly, John Young, Frederick Taubes, Shirley Russell, Arthur Emerson, A. S. MacLeod, Ben Norris, Lillie Gay Torrey, S. Hironaga, Juanita Vitousek, and Helen Dranga.

Still in manuscript form is this artist's autobiography, to which he devoted

the last twelve years of his life. It will make his fourth book. It is a gripping chronicle of his student days in Chicago and Paris, followed by his travels in Algiers, Tunis, the Balearic Islands, Spain, and Italy, and of his later work and study periods in Brazil and Portugal, which were as richly productive as his Hawaii years.

Ma te arofa nui e te roa.
JULIUS SCAMMON RODMAN
Olympia, Washington, June, 1986

CHAPTER I

I SET SAIL

HE first time I heard the woods, "The Forgotten Islands," was from the lips of Dowager Queen Marau of Tahiti. Her dark eyes slowly lighted up with some inner fire as she said, "*Les Iles Oubliées*! Yes, there you will find what you seek, the soul of Polynesia. Go there!"

Dowager Queen Maraü's villa, shaded by flamboyant trees and half buried under jasmine and pale-green coral vines, faces her former palace in Papeete. The palace is now occupied by the *Secrétariat Général* of the French rulers, and all day long officious gendarmes and slow-moving natives stream across the large, casually groomed park, and in and our of the former home of the Pomares, the kings of Tahiti.

It is on the rear veranda of her villa however, from which she can not see these things, that the queen likes to sit, receiving her friends or reviewing and correcting the manuscript of her works on the legends and superstitions of her people. For Maraü is a fine scholar, speaking many languages fluently, while her literary attainments have more than once graced that gaily decorated French journal, *L'Illustration*. Her tiny garden is opposite the American Consulate, the site of which was a gift from the queen to the United States. When her gate is open the queen catches a glimpse of a corner of the lagoon with gaily painted schooners which lie awaiting their cargoes.

It was on the veranda that we were sitting late one after noon last spring. Out in the garden the maids, lovely Tahitian creatures, were sweeping up a shower of faded hibiscus blossoms, the while they chatted in musical Tahitian the latest *paraü apie* (new talk) of Papeete. Their provocative noses, that flatten slightly at the nostrils, and full lips-the upper of which arches voluptuously while the lower retreats slightly, giving a pouting expression were set in oval cafe-cream-colored masks. Their real charm lay in their eyes, dark and mischievous. Great masses of black hair with purple lights fell down to their waists, and over each ear were the seven-petaled, sweet smelling *tiare tahiti*. With a flower over the right ear the Tahitian maid searches for her lover; with one over her left-she has found him! But, I mused to myself, why wear both at once?

The queen, a magnificent figure in a black Mother Hub bard, was seated

behind her flat-topped desk covered with manuscripts. Her head, large and regally imposing, was like a great carved Marquesan idol-done by some native who had seen a portrait of George Sand.

I found myself speaking platitudes with my lips while my real attention was taken up in trying to analyze the most interesting person in the South Seas. Lovina was probably the more colorful, but she, intriguing mistress of the old Hotel Tiare, ruled in the sentimental decade the Frederick O'Brien *siècle* - while the queen, who is the spirit of old Polynesia itself, is yet modern in her acceptance of things as they are. I find this combination of a modern mind combined with a Polynesian soul fascinating beyond measure.

I had no doubt that the forceful line of her nose and powerful chin, and her shrewd eyes, were inherited from her English great-great-grandfather Alexander Salmon, who married a Tahitian princess of Papara, Ari'i-oe-hau. She has the same powerful features, though probably in a lesser degree, as her late brother Tari Salmon, chief of Papara, who, rumor relates, successfully planned the marriage of his royal sister with the last of the Pomares to wear a crown.

The inner fire in the eyes of the queen, which seemed have been lit by the words "The Forgotten Islands," turned slowly to a look of wistfulness which sat oddly on her forceful face. "I have never been there," she said. "I could not stand the trip." She sighed and returned to her usual direct self. "But you, if you can stand it, you should go! And then come back and tell me what you have seen"

But what, and where, are these islands?" I asked, my curiosity mounting by quick degrees.

"They are the Gambier Archipelago," she answered. "There are eight of them, and they lie more than a thousand miles southeast of Tahiti. Manga Reva is the most interesting, the island for you. They tell me it is very beautiful. Of course the story of Laval, the mad priest, is familiar to me, a dramatic story-and tragic .....' Resentment lurked for a second as she brooded over some ancient thing unknown to me. The honking of the French taxi horns on the broom road, and the strumming of guitars outside the post-office, interrupted the ceaseless chattering of the mina birds, those large black and white sparrows of the South Seas, nested in some mango tree.

Her mood changed; she became practical.

"Pedro Miller is sailing for Hiku-eru in the Paumorus to superintend his diving operations there, and then goes on to Maru-tea, the last atoll of the group, seldom visited. Maru-tea lies not far to the north of Manga Reva. He may go there. But his boat is old, he takes many workmen, there will be no comforts whatever-and he may not take you on to Manga Reva. Yet see him!"

She smiled-and I knew that my audience was over. As I bowed my way out, she nodded. The audience with Maraü, Queen of Tahiti-who had seen Gauguin pass, Pierre Loti, Rupert Brooke and Jack London, and who once had the power of life and death over her own subjects-was over.

In my confused state of mind I dropped into the Mariposa Café, and there ran into Charley Nordhoff and James Norman Hall, those two brilliant writers who have successfully weathered the World War and its aftermath, and now call Tahiti their home. Nordhoff, a confirmed pessimist, said: "I wouldn't take that trip to Manga Reva on the *Vaihiria* for a thousand pounds!" Norman Hall, an incorrigible optimist, "Lord, but I'd like to go with you! It is the only group I haven't seen. But then there are the wife and the kiddies. Why, man, you, who are not married, you are an awful ass if you have a chance to go to Gambier and don't take it! It is the one group nobody has gone to for the simple reason that the trip is so very difficult. No boat goes there except a fishing schooner once a year, or maybe once in two years. During the pearl-diving season, however, the traders go back and forth taking supplies and picking up shell. I understand Pedro Miller may have government permission to dive there this year. Go see him!"

Pedro was by now assuming the rôle of a mysterious guardian who held the keys of an Odyssey to the Golden Age. And while our rum punches disappeared Charley and Norman gave me fragments of the Manga Revan mystery. Talk ran on the mad priest. Jimmy said:

"Do you remember the story of the *vahine*-the Manga Revan princess-who, weary of the rigid rule of the priest, secretly one night went with her maid on board a sailing schooner that happened to be in the harbor of Rikitea?

"When the captain had escorted them to his cabin and the door was shut, the *vahine* made a gesture and the maid unfolded a bundle which she had concealed under her *pareu*. From it she took a covered soup tureen and placed it on the captain's table. 'I will give you the contents of that dish if you will get me away from this accursed island and the priest,' whispered the princess and uncovered the tureen. It was nearly filled with milk-white pearls, and the green pearls for which Manga Reva has long been famous. The sight held the startled captain speechless.

"While they were standing there, a rap sounded on the door and it was jerked open. There stood Laval and his native policemen. The woman, maid, captain and pearls were all taken to the church prison, and only after extreme difficulty was the captain able to rejoin his ship. The priest confiscated the pearls and imprisoned the princess!" So said Jimmy.

Next morning I called on Pedro.

I found him surrounded by French officials, supercargoes and commission merchants. When I explained my mission, he smiled and said:

"Certainly you may come with me; at any rate I will take you as far as Hiku-eru, and if you feel you would like to continue the voyage from there it can easily be arranged. Now, a word of advice," said Pedro, who is an efficient business man as well as an *homme du monde*. "Take twice as many supplies as you think you may need for a period of at least six months! You can always sell them, or trade with the natives for local supplies, and once you leave Tahiti you will have great difficulty in obtaining the simplest necessities.

The local and inevitable Chinese shopkeeper whom you will find on every island you are to visit has almost nothing, and charges outrageously for what he has."

So it came about that fourteen cases of food, oil and cigarettes found their way into the already overcrowded hold of the *Vaihiria*, Chin Fu's boat which Pedro had chartered for the summer. My painting supplies I had of course bought in the States before leaving San Francisco.

We will treat the voyage with a romantic touch, in the manner of the 'eighties, and not in the Hemingway style. For seasickness and misery on shipboard offer too much material when treated in this modem spirit, with a lingering over the finer points of light and shade on a bored flying-cockroach sunning himself on top of an empty bully-beef tin which had been the container for the lunches so suitable for an ardent enthusiastic passenger, suffering from an advanced case of *mal de mer* in the fourth stage. For who is able to appreciate at such a moment a detached view-point on the still life so symbolic of a supposed romantic voyage, presented to his philosophic mind but exhausted body in the middle of the too moving Pacific?

After five days on the *Vaihiria*, lying in a horizontal position on my oil-cloth mattress which was stretched on top of the cook-house, Pedro sighted the low palm-fringed atoll called Hiku-eru. An atoll in the South Seas is an ethereal vision seen from the ocean, when through a veil of white surf breaking against lavender coral reefs rise tiny cocoanut-palms. However, the vision is shattered long before landing.

A wan and bedraggled object, I stumbled into a small boat with the rest of the baggage and was towed inshore by a decrepit motor-launch that had followed after the *Vaihiria* and was later to do duty on the diving grounds. Close to the shore, however, it left us to the mercies of the surf. But the skill of our Tahitian crew and the low sea roll made landing easy that day. The boys on shore grabbed the boat after we passed through the surf and out we stepped on to the slimy coral, in water waist deep, and waded to land followed by the luggage.

An atoll is a flat coral island not many feet higher than the ocean from which it rises. Sometimes it is partly, again entirely, surrounded at about a mile from shore by a coral reef which serves as a barrier against the great driving force of the ocean. In a series of breakers which has no end, the sea beats at this reef, throwing itself upward sometimes in a white foam-screen forty or fifty feet high. If the reef is broken at any point, provided the channel is wide enough, small vessels or boats have no difficulty in entering the lagoon behind the reef. Rarely may a large boat-large for these waters!-of a hundred tons or over run the risk of entering, as the lagoons within the reef wall are comparatively shallow. Or, even if the boat finds water deep enough for anchorage, a hurricane may gather, and before the boat can be got out of

the lagoon and through the pass to the open sea beyond, it will be driven on to the submerged coral in its own moorings. This was the experience of Count von Luckner, the "Sea Devil," at Mopelia, where his boat still lies to-day as an example of the insecurity of South Sea lagoons as a safe anchorage. Von Luckner's boat is in two pieces now, but they tell me the hurricane was not responsible for this, but that months afterward a British officer, enraged at the sight of it, sent over a shell and broke its back.

Hiku-eru, and indeed most of the *motus*, or islands, of the Paumotuan group, is an exception to the rule, as it has no protecting reef at all on the windward side. During rough weather landing is impossible as boats are picked up by the powerful breakers and smashed with great force, sometimes upside down, on the coral only fifteen feet from shore. This was to be our own experience at Maru-tea, the last of the Paumotuan atolls at which we touched, when we understood only too well why this archipelago is known as "the dangerous isles." At Hiku-eru, however, the opposite or leeward side of the atoll is protected by a far-flung coral reef over a mile from shore, so that the sound of the breakers is barely heard save during stormy weather, when the sound is not unlike that of an ending series of rapid express trains disappearing in the distance.

It is on the lagoon side of Hiku-eru that all the activity of the island takes place. When one lands at an atoll of this type a disappointing lack of humanity is the first impression, unless a chance native happens to be fishing on the windward side. In that case he collects the village to watch the sport of landing. For it is in the lagoon that the pearl shells lie, in cobalt and cerulean depths, below schools of brilliantly colored and edible fish. Facing the lagoon and scattered along the beach are the *fares* (houses) of the natives, a church or two, a *fare hau* (village council house), a Chinese shopkeeper's score, and perhaps the small frame shack of a lonely gendarme.

Hiku-eru, which is the best known of the Paumotus, has probably the largest population. During the "naked-diving season," which lasts for six months, when the natives dive for pearls on their own, thousands of them gather at Hiku-eru because of the great extent of the lagoon and the large amount of shell in consequence. As the normal population of Hiku-eru is only about fifty persons men, women and children-the conditions resulting from such over crowding can well be imagined-or can they? The odor down-wind is frightful. There are no sanitary arrangements for such an enormous increase in the population. Temporary houses of palm leaves and corrugated iron cover every inch of available space, Chinamen's shops spring up like mushrooms, and the scene on Saturday and Sunday nights makes a camp of the "roaring 'forties" seem like a Presbyterian camp-meeting.

A great buck Paumoru native, dressed in a *pareu* and a newly acquired silk top-hat, doing the *otea* with an abandonment that only rum can produce· ... The scarlet women imported from Moo Fat's in Tahiti, once gentle sweet Tahitian maidens, now brazen-voiced forward strumpets, doing the

movements of the *hula* with virginal white flowers in their coal black hair...A drunk Tahitian pearl-diver, the Crcesus of the day because of a lucky find, sitting on a keg of beer on the moon-washed beach, crowned with flowers and surrounded by crowds of friends to whom he is throwing hundred-franc notes and telling them to go buy out the Chinaman . . . Drunken brawls, the sweet-toned mandolins and melodious accordions vying with each other for attention... On the main street a *vahine* (woman), head of her household, proudly carrying a brass bed which she has managed to salvage from her husband's winnings ... The barking of dogs, the beat of gasoline tins, and lovely throaty Tahitian *hymenes*...And far off the never-ceasing pounding of the breakers on the reef.

But this time it was different. Nothing but empty tin houses, crazy palm cottages falling apart, and hundreds of rusting gasoline and bully-beef tins littered the little atoll.

The white sand under foot was blinding in the hot sun. The white beach, the white surf, and on the stunted cocoa palms the white light of a tropical sun, all made for a desperate and searing weariness from which there was no relief, save in the pathetic little graveyard where on one grave, carefully fenced about, was a flaming bed of zinnias. The dirt in which they had been planted had been brought from Tahiti, as well as that surrounding the one poor breadfruit tree on the island-it too fenced like an exhibit at home in the park conservatory.

The "machine-diving" season was on. It would continue for about two months, all that remained of the six month season which opened so threateningly in December. Before leaving the States I had read in a Chicago paper of the revolt of the Paumotu pearl-divers when Pedro Miller had imported diving helmets to Hiku-eru for the machine season, the "machine" being the apparatus for lowering the diver into the water. Miller had radioed, with the governor's permission, to Tahiti for gendarmes, who arrived and promptly squelched the insurrection. The natives saw only that the divers with helmets could collect infinitely more shell than they, as the average diver can not stay under water for more than three minutes at a time, while the helmeted diver can stay an hour. They did not realize, children that they are, that the God of Progress is an insatiable deity, being no respecter of customs or necessities other than those created for his own lusts.

The seasons rotate. Six months' naked diving one year, a regular free-for-all, and open to all natives from any of the islands in French Oceanie, is followed by the machine diving season, likewise of six months' duration, which oc curs every alternate year. For the rest Hiku-eru sleeps. The machine expeditions are financed by a few pearl-traders who bring their boats and diving machines from Papeete, and also their own workmen, not only laborers but also pearl-divers, those aristocrats of the beach who receive all the attention a successful matador receives from his patrons.

It was with the leading baron in this commerce of pearls and shells that I

had come to Hiku-eru, and merely then to pick up boats, close up the company stores and break up the portable tin houses and to transport all to the next diving-grounds, those off Maru-tea, which I so fondly hoped would be my last stop before Manga Reva.

A new sense of spiritual values comes through many sources: poverty, hunger, oppression, sickness and exile.. Through these channels, dark as they may seem, often burns the pure flame of a new attitude toward life and even death itself. The desolation, the bright and burning dreariness of Hiku-eru, perfectly symbolized in the sun bleached bones of an ancient whale lying on the wind ward side of the island among the brittle and broken coral of the beach, speaks eloquently of the life that has existed both on the atoll and in the seas around it. This desolation burns-itself into the soul of him who sees it. Surely God never created anything more desolate than that strip of broken coral and white sand, dotted with futile and fruitless cocoa-palms.

Everywhere is spread evidence of the holocausts in the form of tidal waves that have laid waste both the inhabitants and their feeble efforts at home-making. In the last hurricane, which occurred in 1906, a town of five hundred inhabitants lying on the western end of the atoll was caught right in the main path of the storm and wiped out to the last man. Even to-day one comes across bleached bones of the victims in the brittle coral that lies at one's feet.

On the other hand the melancholy and man-made remains of the naked-diving season of last year greet one everywhere, in the rotting palm shacks, the tenantless Chinese iron houses, the gaping stores with piles of empty sardine tins on their dusty counters, and all over the island that symbol of progress which the Polynesian was so quick to accept after the rum bottle, the gasoline tin. The native uses the gasoline tin when new as a water carrier and as a cooking pot, and when older as a drum at the feasts, or, appropriated by the small boy, the tattoo of the hypnotic *otea* is practised upon it for the edification of smaller brothers and sisters. From that stage the tins become brown rusty cubicles that scorpions favor for an afternoon siesta, or a hermit crab may deign co grace with his newly acquired shell.

There is ravishing beauty of color, however, when one turns toward the lagoon. Such blue and cerulean, emerald and emeraud, never existed anywhere outside the South Seas. The sand and coral at varying depths show through the water as moving slabs of enormous jewels. But the real wonder of Hiku-eru is to be found below the surface of the water. To twist on a *pareu* and to adjust a pair of water glasses, to dive below, brings one into a world "inhabited by strange sinister monsters with goggle eyes= and delicate fantastic fish that are like little Chinese princesses with intricate head-dresses, and elaborate costumes inlaid with blue kingfisher's feathers. There are ruined palaces of pink coral and lavender coral, pearl shells and seaweed finer than lace. The story of Atlantis lies before one's eyes, in coral shaped like great ruined palaces and temples. Perhaps these exotic fish, like the talking fish in

The King of the Black Isles, are the wicked court of the Emperor of Atlantis, condemned for ever to swim amid the ruins of their kingdom. A cuttlefish eyes one with blinking astonishment-surely a high priest at least! then suddenly departs, trailing his tentacles behind him like an escaping parachute.

But it is the color of this undersea world that awes and fascinates, a blue opaque light that runs into emerald and citron yellows. Shadowed coral casts violet shadows. The yellow angel-fish with stripes of black across their backs, and delicate tendrils that float behind them like aerial rudders, move lazily by in schools. Little blue fish not more than an inch long glide by in shoals of a hundred or more, followed by a hungry parrot-fish with a face like a macaw and a body glistening with cerulean, emerald and lavender scales. Fish like tortoise-shell, fish that look like butterflies and are more deadly than scorpions, vermilion fish, flat black fish with horns like those of unicorns set be tween their eyes, yellow fish, gold fish, and enormous black devil-fish with batlike wings, brown sharks, and their dangerous cousins the gray sharks, tiger sharks, lightning fish which move faster than other fish, fish like the ace of spades, all these and more move in the deep blue depth. In the topsyturvy world of the South Seas I always feel that the birds live in the sea. There are so few on land.

This is the beauty of the daytime. Yet the beauty of night-time is greater. One has only to see such an island in the moonlight to fall for ever under the spell of the South Seas. I know of nothing more beautiful than a lone cocoa-palm silhouetted against a moon-washed beach and a silver sea beyond-somewhere on a deserted atoll. It is the splendor of great spaces, the awesome power of the sea that never ceases its restless activities, the vastness of night with the austral stars above surrounding the Southern Cross directly overhead, it is these that make one shake loose the petty and trivial mental habits of yesterday. One reaches out to the quiet silent forces of nature for help, and she enters and quiets the fever of living as does a mother a feverish child.

It is easy to understand the natives' belief in the super natural, where beauty and desolation are so inextricably entwined. There is no cloying sweetness, no cheap sentimentality in the South Sea arabesque. A death's-head shadows the exotic curves and passionate lines that weave the pattern called Polynesia.

The natives are always talking about *tupapaus* (ghosts), and each group of islands has its own eery tales of the supernatural. While I was living at Hikueru one of Palmer's divers was given too much rope, and his frantic signals passed unnoticed. When the men finally became alarmed at his silence he was hauled up dead. His body was placed in one of the two rooms of the tin shack in which lived Palmer and his native divers. Suddenly in the middle of the night showers of small stones were heard falling on the roof and in the room in which the men were sleeping. The next night also they were awakened, this

time by weeping in the room in which the body lay awaiting burial in the morning .... The phenomenon of stone-throwing is known all over the various groups of islands in the South Seas, and I have heard Mary Hastings Bradley tell similar stories from the Punjab district in India, where she was lion-hunting. I have heard it but once and that occurred during my stay in Manga Reva.

Finally came a day when Pedro Miller said, "Pack up! We leave to-morrow."

For a week preparations had been going on. The most important was the getting of the diving boats into the open sea, for the lagoon of Hiku-eru, although it is on one side of the island only, is in itself completely landlocked. Therefore Pedro had brought with him a narrow-gage iron track, which was laid across the coral, and over this the boats were dragged by strings of young half-naked Tahitians, pulling at ropes, their broad shoulders gleam ing under the fan-shaped shadows of the cocoa-palms. Corrugated iron houses also were pulled down and packed on board the already overloaded *Vaihiria*.

So, under a tropical sun we started, waving good-by to the few workmen left to dose up the store, check up ac counts and guard the pearl shell that schooners from Papeete would soon be calling for. Again the scorching hours, watching the shadows of the sails and rigging crawl inch by inch over the untidy deck and listening to the childlike chattering of the natives. Nights with the austral stars above us, and pink morning clouds emerging from the violet chaos of a Paumotuan night.

One morning four days after leaving Hiku-eru we were lying some distance off the coast of Maru-tea, the lase of the Paumotus. A high sea had been rolling for twenty four hours, and the breakers were thudding on to the unprotected shore with tremendous force.

Putting out from the safety of the *Vaihiria* and advancing in a small rowboat manned by natives toward this wild beast, tossing a white mane as it clawed and tore at the coral and white sand of the beach, was adventure in deed for any stout-hearted beach-comber. I had my doubts, but held tight.

Oars were useless as we hit the last swell, which developed into a wave of astonishing height. For what was probably only the fraction of a second, but seemed endless, we hung suspended on top of the wave before it broke. And as we hung I knew that the boat had been timed wrong. Then down we went, tons of water, boat, natives, baggage and me into a swirling chaos. The next thing I really remember was that somehow my scattered and breathless self had been gathered together again, and that I was standing erect, while a big native clutched me firmly by the arm and propelled me toward the shore. The wave had spent its force and we fought our way with out too much difficulty to shore and stood upon dry sand.

But all had not gone so well with the oarsmen. Encumbered with the heavy oars four of the men had been thrown down on the coral with the boat on top of them, and though three of them managed to escape with cuts that

bled profusely but were not serious, one man, his scalp cut open and his back ripped from end to end by the treacherous coral, had to be carried inshore. My own disgruntled feelings vanished in concern for my big friendly Tioni, all bleeding and shivering from the shock.

"*Aïta mataï!* (No good!)" he said, shaking his head feebly and trying to understand what he had done to deserve such rough treatment. Poor Tioni was a month recovering from the wounds. We had to leave him at Maru-tea and the *Vaihiria* was minus the skilled attention of a fine boatswain when we departed the next day.

Maru-tea escaped the full force of the last hurricane and her palm trees lift themselves proudly into the sky, instead of leaning on one another or lying on the ground as do those of Hiku-eru.

"But are those caricatures on the beach Polynesians?' was my first question of Pedro, after Tioni had been at tended to. He, however, was too busy to answer. I had never seen such ugly women! They had stunted bodies about four feet or four and a half feet high, heads over large, lips that exaggerated every line which makes the Tahitian mouth so appealing, teeth like animal fangs, ugly coarse hair and eyes, and noses! Such noses! Where the Tahitian nostril is subtly flattened these spread over half their faces. "Grandfather Caliban's brood!" I muttered to myself-when along came Prospero, in the form of the administrator of the island, Mr. Walker.

Pedro had prepared me for this English administrator of a French island. Maru-tea it seems had formerly been owned by an English company and recently sold by them to a big French copra company, who owned numbers of these atolls and collected the copra at certain seasons. This copra, the white meat of the ripe cocoanut, is thoroughly dried in the sun and then packed in sacks. It is collected from the various islands by small schooners, taken to Papeete, which is the center of the French South Sea colonies, and there put on hoard one of the Messageries Maritimes boats. Delivered at Marseilles, the oil is extracted from the dried copra and used for commercial purposes, for soap, lotions and shampoos. Mr. Walker, the former representative of the English company, was only waiting for the French official who was to take over his duties, when he would sail for Papeete.

His greeting was crisp and reserved, but his eyes spelled such loneliness that my heart went out to him. He invited me to lunch, and when he mentioned fried chicken I nearly broke down and wept, bully beef and weak tea having composed almost my entire menu for the past thirty days. I held out my hand, and he hated to let go, for fear, I think, that I too would disappear.

After a bath and a rum punch we assembled in Walker's outdoor dining-room, and there did justice to a delectable dinner, of which I remember chiefly the fried chicken and great piles of biscuits made from cocoa-nut milk, and other things I suppose. While we ate, all the hangers on of the administrator's house, and the hangers-on to the hangers-on, at least twenty of them, sat

outside and waited patiently until we had dined, when they would feast. There are never any cold tidbits of chicken or a bit of this or that left for a sandwich later, down in the South Seas! Oh, no! Your native cook, and her brother, his wife and their cousins, and their cousins' cousins take care of all that.

If ever a host wanted guests for dinner our host was that man. We talked at first of generalities about the anticipated reception for the cruiser bringing the new French administrator, expected late in June in Tahiti, the drop in price of copra, and the pearl market. "Shell by the kilo." I have never heard so much about shell in my life before. South Sea pearl-traders are as bad as LaSalle Street brokers or Wall Street commission men in their concentrated interest. Their horizon is shell, and more shell. They go to bed dreaming of it and wake up next morning thinking of it. By day they hear the clink of shell as the natives pack it in sacks and weigh it. On pearl islands just as evening comes on every one gathers at the wharf for the returning little pearl boats loaded with shell; and far into the night the clinking of shell goes on in little tin-roofed houses, as the possibilities for pearls are discussed in shells that have held on to their pearls and will have to be cut to see what lies beneath the blister, called a *chico* in the parlance of the trade.

That night after tea we sat on the veranda of the administrator's house. The little building, half store and half dwelling, faced of course long lines of tall cocoa-palms. Far away between great shadows sparkled the sea, while behind the town lay the lagoons.

Walker talked in a stream not to be interrupted. He told his experiences in the war, to the slightest detail, his relations in Tahiti, his friends .... The man was so glad of an audience, so glad of some one who spoke his language, that an impetus was given to the evening that never exists in America or on the Continent, after the ladies have left the dining-room, and the men chat in a desultory bored fashion over their cigars and coffee. In an objective way I could see what the South Seas do to a man. They make him depend on himself. He can not copy the little traits and mannerisms of his friends; the small talk and amusing slang of the moment have never reached him. He lives by himself and freshly, eagerly reacts to his kind when he finds them. Mostly he watches the stars, or wonders at the power of the wind and the sun, which enter into his scheme of living until he lives in the rhythm of great silent forces which the ancient wise men knew to be all-powerful. And so he grows, a separate mind in communion with the unlimited spiritual forces of the universe or else he falls, unequal co the strain, lower than the kindly but unintelligent natives with whom he lives. And there is no middle ground.

Behind the house sounded a rhythmic tattoo to the accompaniment of staccato notes, probably made by some one pounding on a piece of wood. The moon had risen and down the long alleys of the cocoa-palms blue shadows fell on the ground. "Would you like to see the Paumotu *otea?*" Walker asked. "The men are preparing for the fourteenth of July fête. I'll send Mytea to call them." I had heard of this dance, and I assented eagerly.

In two lines the men formed, while one of them jumped up on the porch and acted in much the capacity of a cheer leader at a college football game. Out of the shadows stepped a slim native dressed in a woman's skirt of *purau* fiber. His black eyes, flashing yet as impenetrable as those in a mask, seemed almost possessed, wearing a curious fanatic stare such as many religious fanatics wear in moments of exaltation. I saw that the tattoo came from a gasoline tin beaten with masterly skill by a young boy, while another lad pounded on a piece of iron wood with a sort of crudely carved drumstick. They began-and a stranger dance I have never seen anywhere.

The two lines of men slowly advanced, to the wildly beating rhythm of the music, keeping perfect time, moving their legs and arms in curious and intricate patterns. At unexpected intervals the music ceased abruptly, and every dancer froze into the position he was in at the last beat. As they were all in perfect accord, the two rows looked like rows of carved statues. Suddenly the music began again, and again stopped more abruptly than before. Thus each series of movements became swifter and more abandoned but perfectly controlled.

The man dressed as a woman took of course the part of the woman in the dance, a not unusual thing to a student of Chinese drama, where the man almost always takes the part of a woman by ancient custom. Walker leaned over and whispered. "That native is a hermaphrodite and always takes the woman's part in these dances, and he does it far better than any of the women. Curiously enough, he is married and has two children." "And the natives?" I whispered back. 'Think nothing about it. Take him quite for granted."

The light had changed. I suddenly became conscious that it had grown darker, although the lamp on the porch still threw its orange rays out into the violet blackness of the grove beyond, lighting up the perspiring natives, whose beautiful bodies now glistened with more than perspiration. I suddenly discovered that it had been raining, and for more than twenty minutes. The porch, I realized, was full of natives who had crept there to escape the tropical downpour. The dance had such a hypnotic effect on Walker, Pedro and me that we had not noticed the moon disappear and the rain commence. We gave the "cheerleader" half a carton of Rosette cigarettes for the dancers, and the crowd disappeared.

Walker's confidences began again, all the flood-gates open. Suddenly he said:

"I knew you were coming. Last night, with not a breach of wind stirring, the tin roof over your head began to rattle violently. I got up and came out on the porch to see for myself the cause of the disturbance. There was nothing, yet the noise began again. It always happens the night before a boat comes. When I first came to the island and heard it, a native explained to me the meaning and said the roof of this house always shakes as a sort of message that a ship is approaching.

"South Sea *tupapaus* are strange beings," continued Walker. "A woman

fell down in a kind of stupor one night, and talked in a voice quite unlike her own. The frightened natives asked me to go and see her. You see I have to do a bit of doctoring here, so the natives look to me when anything goes wrong, with absolute confidence that I'll be able to fix it. Knowing something about South Sea magic, I saw at once that she was possessed. The natives of course said it was the devil. They have learned one or two things from the missionaries, and one of them is to blame the devil with anything which they can not explain.

"The woman was one of those hideous Reao natives you saw to-day. All the labor is imported on this island, and about the ugliest of the lot are these natives from the lonely atolls lying northeast of Maru-tea called Pukaruha and Reao. Whether it is the hardness of the life, the scarcity of food or the implacable cruelty of the elements, they are certainly hard specimens. Unlike the easy-going, handsome, friendly Tahitians, the natives from Pukaruha and Reao are ugly, arrogant and proud, stubborn and revengeful, and can drive as hard a bargain as a Chinaman. Their minds are as ugly as their bodies.

"Well, this woman was raving undoubtedly possessed and I commenced to question the voice. I followed the accepted technique of a South Sea magician in the case, and called first on the name of one demon and then another. The voice answered nothing. So I turned to the natives and asked if any of this woman's family had recently died. One old man said, 'Yes, her mother,' and gave me her name. I then asked the voice if that was her name, and for the first time since I had been questioning, I received an answer, in the affirmative. '*Aue!*' Then I asked her how she died, why she was here and what she wanted. She answered all these questions, and to the last she answered that she wanted her daughter as she was lonesome without her.

"Then I told her she must leave, as the daughter was happy with her husband and baby. If she didn't I threatened to have the priest mix medicine against her. She moaned and cried and begged me to let her stay, but I was stern and told her she must go at once.

"Suddenly the sick woman breathed naturally and woke up, staring at us with bewilderment. I told her husband to give her something to eat-and all was well again. We never had any trouble with that *tupapau* again."

The moon had disappeared, and the rain pattered on the iron roof soothingly, rhythmically, like a lullaby. "I suppose you would better get some sleep if you plan to be off to-morrow." And, showing us to our beds, Walker went into his own room and left Pedro and me to the pleasing prospect of sleep, and sleep that did not have to be adjusted to the rocking and tumbling of a mattress on the cook-house roof of a boat at sea. Pedro and I adjusted our oil-cloth mattresses on a kind of wooden frame, built high from the floor as a protection against centipedes. His bed stood at one end of the room and mine at the other, close to the door which was left open, as the wide veranda protected us from any chance gusts of rain which might have blown in. Wrapping ourselves in our extravagantly designed native bedspreads we were

soon asleep.

As every traveler knows, the rocking movement of a boat subconsciously stays with one for a day or so after a voyage is over. And so it was with me. I found myself back on board ship, rolling easily on a moonlit sea. Slowly a shape rose beside me, and I became aware in some vague fashion that something was happening not connected with dreams. In that twilit state which presages consciousness I dimly saw a figure slide through the doorway, keeping within the shadow when possible, and slowly and silently as a phantom approach my bed. It glided until it was beside me, then I vaguely became aware of a woman whose head was swathed in a *pareu*. She carefully put her head down, held her lips close to my cheek and kissed me. The contact was electric. Instantly I was wide awake. But suddenly Pedro coughed in his sleep and turned over. The woman, whose face I could see but in distinctly, took alarm, and like an animal in a strange forest she commenced to glide backward the way she had come. She slipped through the door, and there was not a sound to give token of her departure. Sleep had vanished for me. I quietly slipped out on the porch, but there was only silence, broken only by the rustling of the cocoa palms and the distant boom of the surf on the reef, the only things that disturbed the marvelous serenity of the Paumotuan night. Was the figure a phantom or.a woman of flesh and blood?

Puzzled, I lighted a cigarette and smoked for a while, bewildered by this new impression breaking across so many I had received during the past month. The rain had ceased before the figure entered the room, and now the moon reigned supreme, drenching the earth, the sea and sky with evanescent silver mist, that turned everything it couched to enchantment. Silver spilled from the polished black fronds of the cocoa-palms. Great clouds piled high against the moon seemed motionless in ghostly suspense. Far off the surf flashed against the coral beach. Magic was woven into every stick and leaf on the atoll. I found my self listening long after the figure had vanished for the sound of a light footfall, returning. But none came. And presently, for the nights are chill in July,-which, here to the south of the line, is in mid-winter,-I was shivering. I went back to bed and, ultimately, to sleep.

When I awoke Pedro and Walker had gone, the sun streamed across the veranda and from the cook-house I heard Mytea's soft cheery voice calling to coffee. "*Haëre maï taofe*." A pair of shorts, a shirt and tennis shoes were thrown on in a jiffy, and I was in the cook-house. Pedro and Walker were just finishing their second cup of coffee. Briefly I told my story of the night. Walker looked at Pedro and Pedro looked at me. "Well, old man, you have either made a conquest or the 'Paumotun *vahine*' (ghost woman) came to see you last night!"

The Paumotuan Islands have a story about a beautiful ghost woman whom lonely shipwrecked survivors have seen, or natives who have strayed off by themselves. She is very beautiful, but alack for the man who falls for her charms. He dies within a few days of some hideous disease.

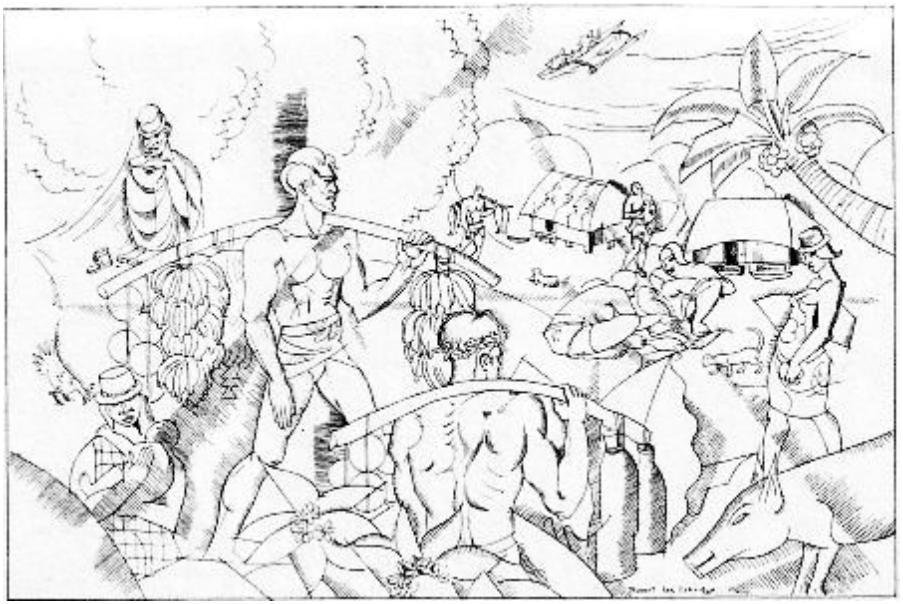
Pedro laughed and said: "I imagine some native Circe has been couched by your charms, bur probably it is just as well we are leaving in an hour, for it might be the ghost woman."

Walker hated to see us go and gave me in parting a case of the enormous pearl shell for which Maru-tea is famous. Some of the shells weigh twenty-five pounds and are a foot and a half across. However it is not in these enormous shells that pearls are found. Only in shells about a year or two years old are pearls liable to be discovered. Seven or eight inches in diameter is a large shell in which to look for pearls.

Again we met the turmoil of the surf, and we had to embark in Pedro's second best rowboat as the other had been so smashed on landing that it had to be left on shore for repairs. He divided his men, leaving half of them, with supplies, on the island. With the rest we rode the surf, and were off, boatload after boatload, for the *Vaihiria*. Late in the afternoon sails were set and we started at last for the Gambier.

Next day at noon Pedro sighted the first speck of land and soon all the peaks of "The Forgotten Islands" were there before us. I confess that my heart beat quickly as we sailed through the reef, protected at last from the great swells of the Pacific, and there before us, still two miles away, arose the seemingly deserted slopes of Manga Reva and her sister islands.

It was five weeks to a day since we had sailed from Pa peete, and here at last we were come to our goal, the al luring, the fabulous *"Iles Oubliées."*



Village Life

CHAPTER II

THE NATIVE WAY OF LIVING

EMOTIONS as we entered the pass of the coral reef surrounding the Gambier Islands were in a haze of glorious exultation. What new adventures lay beyond the reef, in those majestic islands which arose from the calm and emerald waters of the lagoon? Fifteen miles is the diameter of the imperfect circle that the protecting reef creates as it surrounds *Les Iles Oubliées*. We were, as we entered the pass, four or five miles from Manga Reva, though other smaller islands lay nearer the reef. It was a day drenched in sun, fitted to my sense of expectancy.

Slowly we sailed past the first of the smaller islands. "A native pearl-diver, beside me at the rail, constituted himself Baedeker. He pointed to the island and in the odd, almost breathless voice in which the natives speak of anything supernatural he said: "Tara-Vai! Priests mixed big magic here in old times. Old native priests." As we rounded a curve a great stone triumphal arch came into view, which seemed to be the entrance to a tree-lined road that led to a church of no mean dimensions. "Arch you see there," continued Revo, "built by mad priest. He build many more. You see them by and by." One figure, that of an old man, stood shading his eyes on the great deserted wharf, watching us as we passed. "Nobody live there any more-one-two-three," said my guide, checking on his fingers as he counted confusedly the population. "They only go get copra."

He pointed to a very much smaller island past which we were sailing. The sailors were preparing to tack as Manga Reva's imposing silhouette lay to one side of us. "That *motu* him bad, very bad. People no sleep there-if sleep, die. Bad *tupapau*. No people live there for hunera (hundred) years." The island, separated from Tara-Vai by a very shallow but colorful lagoon, gave me a feeling of strangeness. A mountain rose abruptly from a sea-base of torn and twisted rock. The sea pounded on the welter of ancient rock-fragments, and as it foamed against the seemingly inaccessible coast, occasional waterspouts hissed up through the rocks. On the lagoon side, facing Tara-Vai, all was peace. Giant orange trees, banana groves and coffee grew wanton and neglected down even to the water's edge.

A premonition of something too indefinable to explain chilled me. I was to know Aga-kaouitai, 'Sinister Island," better in future. But it was gone in a

second.

The boat had swung round on the new tack and we were sailing on the untroubled waters of the lagoon closer toward Manga Reva. I had been told of the deceiving quality of the lagoon. "It looks," so said Alec Brander to me in Hiku-eru, "about a foot deep." All the coral seems just below the surface, and it is like that for miles. Every second I expected to feel the grinding crunch as the boat went aground; but on she moved over the loveliest submarine garden I have ever seen. The floor beneath us seemed like a covering of deep glass over some moving mosaic. Such coral trees of pink, lemon-yellow, mauve and emerald I had never glimpsed, no, not even in Hiku-eru.

And the fish! Fish I had seen in the sea gardens of Papeete Harbor seemed to have reached here some monstrous development. I saw angel-fish as large as sharks, giant devil-fish and parrot-fish beyond belief enormous. We passed what I took to be a great slippery black rock that lifted itself above the water. As we passed two huge bat winged monsters-or so the wide-finned devil-fish seemed when they jumped-clumsily sported out of the water, splashed with an awful thud and disappeared.

Far off to the right of the prow of the boat lay three tiny islands, beautiful as a mirage. Revo at my side pointed again. "Nobody he live there. Oh, yes, goats, and rappity." The latter I gathered on closer acquaintance were rabbits. Directly in front of us lay, so said Revo, Akamaru, and then just before we turned the natural wall at the foot of the highest mountain on Manga Reva what seemed two pyramids rose from the lagoon. "Akena, that all same one island."

But the overpowering weight and height of a majestic mountain rose above us, and I forgot everything else. It rose steeply from the waters and its summit looked like a vast vacant throne, empty of its god or colossal legendary figure. It gave me too a feeling of having been empty but a short time before our coming. Perhaps the god was displeased, or like the Baal of the Bible, had gone a-hunting. Our visit was perhaps inopportune!

But no time for reflection remained, as new impressions crossed my tired but intoxicated mind every second. On the red top of a small cliff at the base of Mount Duff rose a large stone ruin, roofless. Revo had left me so I turned to Pedro Miller and asked, "What is that, with its tower like a gray bony finger pointing to the sky?" But Pedro was shaving-for his official visit with the governor and couldn't be bothered.

I realized I too must help maintain the white man's prestige and dove into what was called by courtesy our cabin, though neither Pedro nor I had ever slept in it. It was so full of cockroaches and baggage, our more precious packages being out of the rain if kept there, that no room existed for anything larger or more easily ruffled than Mimi the cat.

When I emerged in my tropic regimentals, white ducks, shirt and tennis shoes, the boat was entering the harbor of Rikitea. There before us lay the toy city, half buried under a tropic jungle.

My first puzzled glance took in the tall towers of a great cathedral soaring over the highest of the cocoa-palms, while near the water-front were ruined towers, walls, palaces, and directly below the cathedral an enormous triumphal arch flanked by a long stone colonnade which looked curiously out of place on an almost deserted island. For I had been told that, of the thousands of souls who once lived here, only about two hundred were left on the entire archipelago. High mountains rose directly back of the city. Countless wharves jutted out into the lagoon, all deserted save the one toward which the decrepit *Vaihiria* was steering.

Anchoring a short distance from the wharf, we em barked in the one small boat that remained to us after the disaster at Maru-tea. Slowly we drew up beside the crumbling coral wharf and there stepped out. At last firm land, the Forgotten Islands, solid substantial actualities!

We were met at the wharf by the governor, Doctor Dezoteur, in his uniform as a surgeon of the French Army, his assistant Monsieur Fontana, a young opera singer of all things! of Italian and French extraction, and their wives. Under the great mango tree which shaded the road just above the wharf introductions were made, and eager inquiries on the part of Doctor Dezoteur as to whether there were letters. No schooner had passed Manga Reva for six months and he and Madame were hungry for news from home. Also Madame wanted to peer into the chic journals devoted to fashions and see what her Parisian sisters were wearing. They had had two years of exile from their own kind, only relieved six months before by the arrival of Monsieur and Madame Fontana, sent on by the governor of Tahiti to assist in certain governmental matters. There was also of course Père Feria, the aged priest who had fallen heir to the crumbling dominion created by Laval. Père Feria had lived on the island for forty-two years and was, so I had been told, a man of great culture and refinement. He had devoted the better part of his life to the dying remnants of the Manga Revan peoples. He was not, however, on the wharf when we landed.

But natives! Every native who had heard the news of our arrival, via cocoanut radio, was sitting or standing about in a kaleidoscopic confusion of color and costume and line and movement. A few of them walked up, put out their hands in friendly welcome and greeted us with, *'Ia ora na oe"* One or two women kissed Pedro.

In the general confusion I was so bewildered that, frankly, I didn't know whether I was dreaming or not. Perhaps I would wake up in Papeete, having had too many rum punches at the Cercle Bouganville. Pedro, noticing my confusion, called over a buxom matron and said in Tahitian: "Take the white man to Marianne's villa. He rented it from her in Papeete where he saw her, and she has given him the keys. I'll see you later." And so, after taking leave of the others, Mama Po and I started down the street. Po means "midnight." So Madame Midnight proudly escorted the island's guest down the road to the new house. Greetings and questions were put to Lady Po as to her new

conquest as we passed. She good-naturedly parried all chaffing and on we went.

Down the sandy road we walked. There is only one street in use, if street it may be called, in Rikitea, capital of the Gambier Archipelago and ancient seat of government of the cannibal kings who once ruled their tight little island kingdom from this still lovely but forlorn and deserted city. Unkempt, extravagant, tropical growth straggles on either side. Great, broad, scalloped and shiny leaves of a dark green, leaves of the breadfruit, and long, graceful, pale-green and blue-veined, glistening banana trees, with a welter of dried and decayed stalks of other years at their base, lined the way. Few are left of the population of old times to glean the neglected gardens of more prosperous years.

On we went, passing thick-walled stone houses, roofless and untenanted. Occasionally a little frame house strove cheerfully with its life within and without to stem the silent tide of an old death that seemed to creep slowly nearer and nearer to all living things or to houses where movement still spelled life. In the scattered yards surrounding the little frame houses were goats and little black and white bleating kids, babies, and staring, wide eyed, little dark-skinned boys and girls. Occasionally we passed a group of older natives dressed in honor of the boat's arrival in blue jeans and brilliant calico. One or two handsome satin-skinned youths, built like Greek statues with scarlet *pareus* around their loins, stopped talking to fawn-eyed young girls who tittered either with embarrassment or pleasure at the figure we cut in passing. Tantalizing minxes, as I found out later. And any bump of conceit I ever possessed completely disappeared, as I could understand Tahitian, especially when it was directed at my personal appearance.

Madame Midnight stopped before what at first glance I took to be a badly kept public park, surrounding as it did a large pink villa, faded to a beautiful plum color, which formed a splendid note to harmonize the hot greens and smashing pinks and reds of the vegetation and flowers about it. A hedge of some tropical plant and a row of orange trees heavy with fruit guarded the yard from too close inspection from the curious.

"*Ie fare oe!* (Your house!)" she said, smiling.

But, having smiled and waved an ample hand in its direction, she seemed to consider her duty done, On she went, down the road, unhurried and apparently unflurried by contact with the traveled great. Her voluptuous hips, swaying rhythmically, were clad in a pattern of printed cotton that at home would have looked cheap and dispirited. Her legs were bare, beautiful solid legs that could outwalk any *popau* -white man. On her way she went, head erect. But all this dignity was partly for my benefit. For scarcely had she turned the corner than she as surrounded by every woman within reach. And then-what a slaughter of my unfortunate person! An understanding of the native tongue certainly strips all self-illusion if one is unlucky enough to hear them talk. For Polynesians have a rare sense of humor which is scarcely

spiritual, and the things their white sisters think in the privacy of their boudoirs are broadcast by these dark-skinned Manga Revan maidens over the cocoanut radio to the entire island, with amplifications on the original theme. What we used to call Sin has no privacy in the South Seas.

When Madame Po had departed I turned to enter my new domain. Walking into the yard was a simple matter as the gate had long since disappeared. The house, a one story villa with many verandas, had been from the road, seen over the tops of the trees, a rather picturesque and imposing structure as such things go in the South Seas. I was told that a pearl-diver had built it years ago, after a lucky find during the pearl season. All the lumber had been imported from Australia, and it had taken a year and a half after the order had been sent to Australia to receive the building materials. It had been quaintly conceived and oddly put together by a Tahitian carpenter of sorts after blue-prints sent on from Papeete. The best feature of the house was the iron roof, which really did keep me from the rains that fall so frequently in the tropics and semi-tropics alike.

On one side of the house and a little distance from it was a sort of stream or canal, and at the back through a grove of banana trees could be seen a lovely beach. No one but a Polynesian would have built the back of this house to face the front door of Paradise. Near the house was a decrepit old shack which, so I had been told by Marianne from whom I rented the house, did duty as a cook-house.

But the house itself! The front steps had collapsed. I tried those to the side door, and they held. Then my keys. I tried one and it worked, and I found myself in a big room filled with hornets buzzing about. There was a litter of nondescript objects, innumerable iron and enamel beds, not set up (signs of great wealth these metal beds in the South Seas); on the floor pearl shells, old lamps without globes, a Bible printed in the difficult Manga Revan language. Such was my new home. And the tropic sun had been shining on a house with an iron roof that had been shut up for years! And it was hot, very hot and I was hungry, and weak from the sea trip.

I sat down on the porch. All the natives were at the wharf getting the latest Papeete gossip from the sailors. My cases were being taken out of the hold and in an hour or so I would have a wide choice of tidbits to choose from. But at the moment I was at low ebb. I felt that even my cigarette was drooping dejectedly.

As I sat so I saw a man coming slowly down the path coward me. He was about thirty-five, deeply tanned, bare headed and walking without shoes. Tentatively he looked at me, as though he might change his mind if I jumped or growled or did any other aggressive thing. Me - I was too weak to slaughter a mosquito! He came up to the porch and said, "Do you speak English?"

"Do I speak English! My aunt! Do I speak-Look here, are you real, or is my hunger too much for me?" I answered with more energy than I thought I possessed.

"When I saw you talking with the Frenchmen I thought you might be French," said my visitor apologetically. Then, with a gesture at once shy and eager, he held out his hand.

"My name's Tom," he said.

"And mine's Bob," I answered, grasping his hand, "and I paint-and am probably a little balmy or I shouldn't have taken this trip. Let's be friends!"

And from that moment an unspoken agreement existed between Tom and me to share each other's thoughts, fancies and aspirations. Such I believe is true friendship. Picture the two of us, alien citizens on a lonely South Sea island, the only two English-speaking people on the whole of the archipelago. Tom, sensitive to a fault, rarely sought the acquaintance of chance voyagers as he preferred living with the natives and so few travelers understood. I had of course the friendship of the governor and his wife, and later a very tender friendship with Père Feria, the aged priest, which I shall always cherish. Tom was shut our from active association with the three named for two reasons: he did not speak French, and he was living completely native and with natives. So our friendship, Tom's and mine, was an oasis on this palm-fringed island, an oasis in which a former Missouri farmer, for such Tom proved to have been, and an itinerant artist talked and thought with all the freedom two countrymen feel in a foreign environment. Our mutual understanding and sympathy was often unexpressed in words, because telepathy worked faster and made words so unnecessary.

Tom it was who made me see the other side of existence on Manga Reva. Having gone completely native for five years, he was, with his easy-going fine humor, a good friend and an invaluable guide to the native way of living. His story was simple. After a disillusioning marriage in the States, and its resultant divorce, he had drifted out to Papeete, where he met a native girl from Manga Reva. She told him her family had much land in this remote spot and begged him to come and live on it. Tom was ready prey for the ancient Polynesian spirit that lies in wait for the soul of a world-weary adventurer who wants peace and forgetfulness at any price. So Tom had come to Manga Reva with the girl, by way of the Austral Islands, and having come-had never left.

His girl, Pindini, belonged both through her father, Uteato, an old pearl-diver, and her mother, Tiare, to the only two families of genuine ancient Manga Revan blood on the islands. Consequently the family was possessed of enormous tracts of land through the native inheritance laws, ratified of course by the French Government. When Tom reached Rikitea he found a welcome from the native relatives of his wife's family. He found also that hers was no empty boast as to her property. Her grandmother had left her a fine wooden house, for the South Sea Islands, considerable tracts of land, and one entire valley called Naruvaki, which lay about an hour and a half's walk over the mountain, and by the sea or lagoon side from Rouriki.

Tom, who in the States had been a farmer of no in considerable means, a

carpenter and at times a gambler, during his western career on a ranch in Wyoming, found the Valley of Natuvaki fertile field for his love of the soil. Immediately upon arriving at the archipelago he set out single-handed to clear his girl's land of the insidious mango thickets and the numberless pandanus trees. In the first flush of enthusiasm over his new-found *fetii* (relatives) he also set out to do the same for Utato, his father in-law.

Now came the beginning of his disillusionment. He soon found that he was the only person of all the large number of people with whom he was now associated, and who were relatives of sorts, who actually carried out the work he promised. All the others praised him for his energy-no doubt sincerely, since he was white, an American and a decided social asset to the family-and promised to be on hand when a thicket was to be cleared. But somehow they always failed to turn up at the promised moment.

Nevertheless Tom continued his labors. Beginning with his father-in-law's house he repaired the verandas, the roof, the cook-house. Then he turned his attention to the girl's house. Here at home the disillusionment grew stronger.

While Pindini had been in Papeete one of her sisters, who had picked up a ne'er-do-well French beach-comber, had looked over the houses belonging to her relatives and had moved into the best of them. That it belonged to her sister, who might object, never entered her head. Her own house, doorless and windowless, lay across the way in a lovely location close to the lagoon, but she and her towheaded beach-comber were too lazy to put it into a livable State.

Consequently when Pindini arrived with her handsome good-natured American the sister welcomed Pindini, as it were, into her own house. Tom, being in the first flush of a new experience and not being hardened or inured to the easy ways of the Polynesians, let matters drift, thinking to mend them later.

André, as Marie's towhead was called, had the only skipper's papers on the island. Although his own boat had long ago been wrecked, he could sail any native's boat outside the reef and was called on from time to time for short voyages. These voyages were usually to Maru-tea, a night trip in a boat with an engine and about a three-day trip in a small sailboat if the wind was fair. So he was frequently away from home.

But an evil genius seemed to govern every movement that André made. When I arrived on the island he had just returned from all but death. He had put out to sea against the advice of all the natives who knew anything about their variable and uncertain winds, and after a day's straight sailing ran into a hurricane. He first threw the sail away, then the mast. His boat was twice overturned, and twice he managed to right it. Finally, after five days, some chance of wind and weather blew him back into the harbor of Rikitea where he was picked up, starved and almost dead of thirst, the closest resemblance to a living skeleton I have ever looked upon. I can see yet his great tortured eyes, perverse and resentful, set in a face which was a caricature even at its best; his

once light unkempt hair, bleached almost the color of corn-silk; his clothes, strips of material that somehow still hung on his thin body. He was of course raving when they picked him up.

Now while André was away his girl, as fickle as the winds that were tossing her man about, was entertaining a series of lovers from the *Vaihiria*, the boat on which I had come. Chinese or native, Marquesan or Paumotuan, it made no difference to Marie as long as they bootlegged a bottle of rum for the party. Now all this was contrary to the none too strict system of Polynesian morals. Married women may entertain lovers, but discretion, the outward mark of taste, governs that lapse from domestic virtue in the South Seas as it does at home under the shadow of the Women's Aid and the Rotarian Club. But Marie flaunted, not gloriously but soddenly, her belated victories. And all this in one of the rooms of the house in which Tom and Pindini were unwillingly playing the rôles of host and hostess.

Here it was that Tom was so thoroughly disillusioned as to the glamour that had been cast over his first impressions of Manga Reva. Then too his forty or more relatives were always hungry. Tom, with his solid white man's energy, had brought to fruition the finest *maniota* farm on the island. It covered about a third of the not inconsiderable Valley of Natuvaki, a tract of about eight acres. Here *maniota*, arrowroot, gently swayed in the breeze, interspersed with *papaya* trees laden with quantities of melon shaped fruit that some one has cleverly said tastes like a nectarine eaten in a pine grove at midnight. Onions, which Tom planted in rotation as he did his *maniota*, lettuce, cabbage and even tobacco were among his crops. But the uselessness of industry in the South Seas was never better shown than by Tom's good-natured reference to his short lived tobacco crop.

During one of the periodic tobacco shortages, which occur before a trading schooner is well out of sight of the harbor after the Rosette cigarettes are exhausted, Tom had planted himself a tobacco patch against the next shortage. He arrived one day at the plantation to find that Tiare, his mother-in-law, and a bevy of ancient crones had swooped down upon his tobacco, pulled up all that was above ground, though none of the plants was more than three inches high, and were smoking it green.

Maniota is the staple article of food in almost all the Polynesian Islands. A tuber, it looks not unlike a mammoth parsnip and resembles it slightly in flavor. Baked in a native oven or boiled in an iron pot, it is easy to take and if the natives have nothing else they can always make a meal from *maniota*. *Maniota*, too, is the real basis for that romantic dish called poi, famous in Hawaii and from New Zealand to the Marquesas. The root is grated with a cowrie shell or a piece of coral and the shredded pulp is pressed through a sieve or a piece of cocoanut fiber into a trough or native boatlike receptacle called an *umite*. There it is washed with several waters and finally allowed to dry. The powder, if properly cleaned and dried, is as white as the coral sands that line the beach. Its purpose is much like that of corn starch as it thickens

any food with which it is cooked.

To make poi, pumpkin, *papaya*, taro or bananas are boiled until soft, then the arrowroot powder, called *piere*, is mixed with a little water to make a paste and poured into the hot fruit and vigorously stirred with a wooden paddle. This becomes a thick sticky mass, quite palatable if enough sugar has been added. Then cocoanuts are split, the white meat shredded with a stick to which a bit of iron has been attached to form a kind of primitive grater, and the shredded white meat squeezed through a piece of cocoanut fiber until all the juice is pressed out. The dry mash is thrown to the squealing pigs and over-anxious chickens. The juice is stirred in with the poi-and the dish is ready to serve. No native feast is ever complete without two or three kinds of poi. It is, however, a dish not made every day as it entails a lot of work, and the *maniota* is just as nourishing if cooked in an oven-according to the native view-point, that is.

Now every relative of Pindini to the farthest removed felt that Tom's patch of *maniota* was common property of the family, and helped themselves accordingly. None of them had ever dug a spadeful of earth or helped set the young plants into the ground at planting-time, nor yet again were they ever to be found when weeding was to be done. Yet when the *maniota* waved shoulder high (the plant looks not unlike a smaller castor-bean plant) and they knew the root was right for pulling, they went in boatloads around the island-it was easier. riding in the boat than walking and ate their fill of baked *maniota* and crisp onions. Then they filled their boats and went home, catching a dozen or so of Tom's chickens for good measure. Against this Tom could find no recourse. Utato, his father-in-law, who was in a sense the head of the clan, saw nothing out of the way in it, and Tom was not after all in a position to alienate the entire community with which he lived.

He did not have any taro on his plantation. The little spring on the place was too small to develop into the muddy swamp-like tract that is necessary for the young taro plant. The plant has no stalk, the enormous broad heart shaped leaves rise from the upper end of the root, which is oblong in shape, nine to twelve inches in length and five or six inches in diameter. These are baked in a native oven, the skin being first scraped off with a shell.

Breadfruit, before I went to the South Seas, had an alluring quality, shall we say stimulating to the romantic appetite. Delicately browned loaves of bread shaped like cantaloupe, or suspended in strings like pan rolls, were I confess my secret dream of what I hoped this intriguing sounding vegetable to be. It was not quite as my fancy had painted it. I found it hanging on large trees covered with enormous leaves shaped not unlike an exaggerated fig leaf. The fruit is pale green in color and about the size of the small cannon-balls that used to stand on the public square in my youth. Its outer rind or skin, very hard, is covered with a golf-ball-like surface of small irregular pits or tiny hollows. An inner rind about a half-inch thick surrounds the fruit itself, which when baked tastes not unlike a doughy potato. Perhaps fresh bread, rolled up

until it becomes a semi-firm mass, best describes the bread fruit when cooked.

Tom or his *vahine* used to bake it in a native oven. Such an oven is made by digging a good-sized hole in the ground and lining the bottom with heated stones, which are then covered with leaves, upon which pieces of the breadfruit are placed. Then a layer of leaves is placed on the breadfruit, and another layer of stones; and so on until the cavity is filled. Chickens, yams and bananas may all be placed together in such an oven. In about thirty minutes Pindini would rake off the stones and leaves and the food was found cooked to perfection.

Pindini vaguely reminded me of an Indian squaw. There is sturdier, less compromising stock, in the Manga Revan than in the Tahitian. Then too Pindini's ancestors were a proud warlike race given to that strange taste for human flesh. She herself cared more for fishing than for household duties, far more. With a half-caste, of Chinese and Tahitian parents, whose only name seemed to be Mama, Pindini would push out from the little coral beach in back of Mama's house in Mama's canoe. And there in the lagoon they would fish until late in the afternoon, and gossip. Great cronies, these two: the half-caste with a pair of twinkling little eyes set aslant and a hard voice that somehow had an ingratiating purr, and Pindini with her straightforward, rather arrogant stride, and her broad smile that was frankness itself. Her hair was as straight as an Indian's and was always being oiled with perfumed cocoa oil.

Toward evening Tom would wander over with a couple of *traou*, a fish that looks like a piece of carved tortoise-shell and tastes like the finest mountain trout. "Pindini sent 'em over," he would say.

"Stay and eat, old man," I would urge--and mean it.

"No," he would answer timidly, "the girl wouldn't like it."

The fact was Tom had gone quite native. He dreaded eating with his own kind, even with me, though we were the best of friends. A rum punch would tempt him, but so would it tempt a native. The natives never like eating with a *popau*. They prefer their own clan, love to sit on their haunches in the cook-house and enjoy their food, eating fish and breadfruit and poi alike with their hands. There is a charm in lack of all formality, especially out-of-doors, with the lagoon sparkling through the trees and the oranges ripening overhead. But a native cook-house is a smelly place. The one sign of Tom's white blood in this matter of eating lay in the fact that he could never bring himself to eat with the family in the cook-house, but he and his girl would eat by themselves, on the porch or inside the house when it rained.

The fish were always baked in a native oven just as the breadfruit was cooked. Wrapped in leaves it had a delicious flavor. I found it palatable after sprinkling it with salt and spreading a little canned butter on it.

My own household was presided over for a time by one Marcel, a half-caste of indeterminate extraction. Marcel had returned from Papeete a year or so before my advent on Manga Reva, having lived there since she was a child. It seems she had taken the fancy of some Tahitian supercargo. In Tahiti she

had passed through the hands of a French pearl merchant, several young French captains and clerks, an American or two, and of course a few native sailors to season her progress. She had one child, a terrible-looking brat that resented everything, its birth, its looks, its surroundings and every one with whom it was forced to associate. My first acquaintance with this embryo was one morning while I was waiting for my coffee; Marcel rounded the corner of the house with the brat in her arms. It was about three years old and was alternately yelling with rage and chewing at a piece of raw fish.

Before we parted our ways Marcel's duties were to prepare my coffee in the morning. This was made over a tiny oil stove which I had brought with me from Tahiti with a large supply of oil. I had had too many disillusionments on my previous trips to the Paumotus and the Leeward Islands not to ward off at least some of the difficulties and discomforts of housekeeping in the South Seas.

The coffee grown in Manga Reva is superb, being far richer in flavor than the better known coffee of Rapa in the Austral Islands. Cook, among other good deeds, left coffee on these islands and, particularly on Manga Reva it had flourished, nourished by the soil and climate alike. Manga Reva and her sister islands lie just on the edge of the southern tropics where they join the temperate zone. The climate is ideal for coffee-growing. In Cook's time, and later during Laval's reign, great coffee plantations had been planted on the various islands. But as time went on and the mad idea of forcing an alien scheme of civilization failed in the Gambier, these plantations were abandoned. Nevertheless the coffee continued to flourish in the jungle. There is plenty of it and the natives store it for four or five years, after which it becomes aged just as wine does. Then it is roasted and ground fresh every morning. The native begins at dawn the hunt for sticks for the fire. Nobody bothers with a pile of firewood; in some obscure way they seem to think that wouldn't be playing the game. The outside husk or skin is removed from the coffee, after which it is roasted and ground. Finally the water is boiled and then poured through a native filter made by tying or sewing a cloth bag on to a circular piece of wire with a handle. The coffee is delicious and stronger than brandy. Two ordinary soup bowls is the usual native morning cup and it takes about two hours for the ceremony of preparing it.

No native need go hungry on Manga Reva, and yet the amazing fact is that they do. I have heard Tom time after time say, 'Well, Uato was over begging some *maniota*. Said there wasn't a thing in the house to eat." And Utato owned enormous tracts of land and had three husky sons who did not seem to know what work meant.

A South Sea feast is quite naturally an orgy of food, and of drink if it can be had. A native family will live on breadfruit and baked *maniota* for weeks. Then, when some occasion for a feast comes along, they will kill every chicken they have and most of the pigs, cook all their bananas into poi and, combining forces with relatives, will throw a real party. I always found these

parties an awful ordeal after the first hour. I once attended four wedding feasts in one afternoon. Four couples who had lived in harmony and peace for years, three of the women having done their conjugal duty to their husbands by rearing families of no small proportions, decided suddenly to be legally married. As far as I could see they did this as a lark. All the weddings were held at the *fare hau*, and then the wedding-party and guests started the rounds of feasting.

At the first house we found ourselves facing a regular stage banquet. On each plate was an enormous corrosively purple yam, two kinds of poi, bananas and taro, baked breadfruit and a loaf of native bread. These were appetizers only, and to be taken home apparently if one preferred waiting for the feast which had not yet begun. I noticed the native ladies producing from some mysterious source small bags evidently made of flour sacks. In these were placed the purple yam, the sticky poi wrapped in ti leaves, the breadfruit and the bread. These were placed to one side and everybody waited eagerly for the dinner.

Meanwhile, pretty girls fluttered about draping the guests in wreaths made of *tiare tahiti*, pink oleander blossoms, orange blossoms, pineapple pits and each and every flower of the field or of the fruit-tree. As this performance was repeated at each of the four wedding-feasts that after noon the guests, when night fell over the reef and the hibiscus wreaths were wilted, looked like the horses and floats seen at the Tournament of Roses.

The menu of the feast itself consisted of great bowls of rice cooked with chicken, bowls of rice in which pork had been diced, chicken baked in native ovens, chicken cooked with the leaves of some edible plant, lobsters, raw fish soaked in a mixture of cocoanut milk and sea-water in which had been squeezed the juice of limes, crayfish in vermilion piles, salted swordfish, fried octopus rings or sliced tentacles a little more appetizing than a broiled automobile tire, but not much-baked bananas and *feis*, the mountain plantain, more breadfruit and yams. There was also heart of cocoanut salad. To make this delicious dish, which is the most profligate gesture which can be made by a Polynesian host, a young cocoanut tree must be cut down. The heart of the tree is cut out, and is made into a salad tasting rather like fresh and tender almonds. As the cocoanut tree is the chief source of a native's in come, it is no slight sacrifice for the pleasure of a guest.

After all this, dessert was served on large platters, poi made from Samoan bananas, *papaya*, taro and pumpkin, a thoroughly satisfying dessert but a meal in itself. Following this modest collation coffee was served. Of course also a river of white wine and gallons of orange beer flowed during the dinner. Orange beer is made from the fermented juice of oranges and works about as fast as Kentucky White Mule.

This was the first dinner. Somehow I didn't keep such good track of the other three. Vaguely I remember being helped home by Maho, a rose-crowned, very red-haired and very drunken savage. And such a sight as my

house presented the next morning! Never have I felt so debauched! Leis and couronnes of flowers lay scattered all over the floor, dripped from the bed, and one slipped from my head as I sheepishly arose from my couch. The perfume of fading oleander, like hot chocolate, the sweet hyacinth-like odor of the *tiare tahiti* and the pungent magnolia perfume of the frangipani were so strong that I raced to the lagoon and jumped in, to get rid of the heavy exotic odors and memories of the night.

The Manga Revans have two sources of income and in that they are luckier than nearly all their fellow islanders. Pearls and copra create the channels through which the white man's luxuries and picturesque trash may flow for the childlike delight of the native.

The copra season, or the gathering of the cocoanuts and the making of copra, is called the Rahui and occurs twice every year. One season comes in July and the other in December. Rikitea is deserted during this season except for the governor, the few prisoners who wander in and out of a crazy *fare haude*, or prison, which is scarcely ever locked, an ancient crone, a graybeard or two-and myself. Every one goes to the family cocoanut patches and settles down to the job of making copra. They make a regular picnic of it. Boys and young men climb the trees and throw down the cocoanuts. These are torn out of their outer husk by forcing the husk from the shell after it has been pierced on a long spike rooted in the ground. Then the shells are cut open and hung up to dry. Like enormous oyster shells they hang, on the *purau* trees beside the lagoon, or strung from cocoa-palm to cocoa-palm on long ropes of *purau* fiber. At a distance they look not unlike the skulls of old men sparsely covered with matted brown hair. As a matter of face I always got this macabre effect from the sight of an unexpected shell confronting me either in the jungle, on my walks of exploration, or down by the beach after the tide had receded.

After the shells containing the white cocoa meat have been thoroughly sun-baked those which have escaped the voracious and clever pigs are taken down from the trees, and the white meat forced out by inserting the flat blade of a knife between the meat and the shell. This meat is once more exposed to the sun and after a few days is as hard as leather. It now has little or no moisture in it and is ready to be packed in sacks, to be picked up by any chance schooner that luck may bring to Manga Reva.

The price of copra has fallen from two francs forty centimes to about one franc sixty centimes a kilo, and a kilo is a little over two pounds. So the native's income is cut in half by the actions of those mysterious gods that control finance, even in the furthermost corners of the South Seas. And so the *vahine* gets a few yards less of gaily printed cotton dress-goods when the trading schooner drops its anchor off the main wharf. There are fewer trinkets and not so much tobacco and sugar in the little paper parcels that the native brings proudly home after the trading has been consummated. But "*Aïta*

peapeau! (It doesn't matter!) We have enough for to-day," says Rourini, and lights his cigarette, the first in rwo months, with a swagger.

I understood Rourini's swagger perfectly and lighted my own with an ill-concealed air of opulence. Every one on the island ran out of tobacco around the third month of my visit except the governor, Doctor Dezoceur. I had brought what I thought enough cartons of Camels and Rosettes, that cigarette so popular in the South Seas, put up in round yellow packets with a gaudy rose on the front of the package. But I had given mine away with a gesture, for model hire, in trade for chickens and eggs, or out of sheer love of giving them to my native friends who were bringing their yams and bananas in generous quantities to my kitchen. And so there came a day when the cartons were empty and I was looking for cigarette stubs in likely corners of the studio. Every day a schooner was expected, but not until two months after the tobacco shortage occurred, and five months after I had landed, did we hear the thrilling cry, "*Potii!* (A sail, a sail!)"

Following the tobacco shortage came a sugar shortage. This time I had been forehanded for, following Pedro's advice, I had brought two big sacks of sugar, one brown and one white. Luckily I locked the sack of white sugar with my cigarettes and bacon and other white man's delicacies in a large cupboard in the corner of the studio. One day when the sugar shortage was in full swing I investigated the kitchen and found six of the looser-lived creatures of Manga Reva, of Marcel's ilk, having coffee, or better sugar with coffee. At least half a pound went into each bowl of coffee, and they were all taking home suspicious looking packages. I decided to prowl about further in the larder and found a few lonesome grains of brown sugar in what had once been a hundred-pound sack, and these grains were being hotly contended for by an army of ants!

As scarcely any sugar had been used in cooking I realized that a hundred pounds of sugar was a large premium to pay for the privilege of having the laziest cook on the island. And I found that for some time I had been keeping an entire family I knew nothing about, as well as the neighboring policeman, in food and drink. In addition I paid Marcel the princely sum of one hundred and eighty five francs a month, which was sixty francs more than the governor's cook received.

I departed from the kitchen with much the self-contained air that Hamlet carries from the throne room of his stepfather, pondering a righteous wrath.

And then Marcel forgot to turn up for three or four days. When she finally returned I thanked her for her services, but said any more of her charm and kindness would ruin me, if not socially, financially. She wept, and mentioned her starving child. I parried with a far-off glance, which I hoped looked full of reveries, and murmured, "Raw fish!" She wept on and I nearly weakened, until I saw her eyes, brimming with tears, fixed on my locked cabinet in which reposed, among my remaining canned treasures, my sack of white sugar. With emotion in my voice I bade Marcel good-by. I said:

"I am sure you will enjoy the diet of *maniota* on the other side of the island, as American luxuries are so enervating to your native vigor."

She departed. And I suppose as a parting gesture, she forgot to bring in my laundry which had been put out to dry on the shrubbery of a neighbor's garden. For a week or more various pieces of my wardrobe came back singly and in groups as kindly friends discovered something that looked like Bob's habiliments blowing about among the trees.

My native friends however did not call me Bob. They called me Maniota, or Mr. Arrowroot, a cognomen which I did not find too flattering. I had acquired it one fateful evening soon after my arrival when at a native party I danced, being full of rum and the assurances of the women that surely never could they exist another hour without the sight of my fair person in motion to the tune of pipes and drums.

It was at a *hymene* that I earned my name. A South Sea *hymene*, or gathering, is a fixed and permanent part of the social life of the natives, and in the more remote islands is almost the only means of community amusement, since there are no movies or other white man's games, and even the native dances have almost died out.

The word *hymene* comes from the English word "hymn," and it is significant that the hymns have been the most catching feature of the religions that have swarmed over the South Seas in the eyes of the pleasure-loving natives. Adaptable to any amusement, the natives found the hymns about the only feature of all these serious efforts to improve them which they really like. They immediately incorporated all hymns into their own language and, what is more important, their sensuous tone scale. As time went on their own ancient and delightful songs, frankly porno graphic, without pretense or shame, and the Baptist and Catholic hymns alike were all swept into the same cate gory. They are all classed as *hymenes*.

Now when a new person arrives on an island the swankiest thing the natives can do is to put on a *hymene* (the word also means a gathering where *hymenes* are sung) and a feast. Pedro and I got the *hymene*, but not the feast. Had there been no French official that would have been put on too. But in a sense we were both for the moment exalted guests under the fluttering tricolor that flew from the Residence, so the feast was omitted.

Pedro whispered to me: "As you are going to stay on the island and naturally want the natives' good-will, when your name is called and they improvise a song about you, get up and dance."

"But I can't before all these people! The governor will think I am stark crazy."

"No, he will understand, and I will tell him that I told you. You see, Eskridge, an ancient custom among the natives when visiting a strange island is to dance or sing at the first big gathering at which they are entertained. That is the way their new friends see their number, so to speak. Natives are quick to sense a social friendliness, a good-fellowship. Once this has been

established your reputation is made and they will do anything for you. They may even give you a name, which is the highest compliment they can pay you. You are then one of them."

I had dined well at the home of the governor, who like all Frenchmen was a delightful host, and when we arrived at the *hymene* was feeling mellow and happy about everything, even about dancing. The music had started when we arrived and songs were sung, beginning with one for the governor, one for Madame Dezoteur, one for Pedro and finally Ropati (Robert) was being eulogized in soft throated stanzas. As I remember it ran something like this:

Ropati is from Merite. (America.)
He is thin and has many eyes. (My glasses.)
Rich, oh, very rich,
For have we not seen great cases,
Fourteen of them,
Brought from the boat
On the strong arms
Of Mytea, Rourini and Tioni?

Pedro said then, "Now! Jump up and dance. Here's another rum punch to help you."

Swallowing hard I downed the punch, and went to it.

My Manga Revan friends and the Tahitian sailors from Pedro's boat were all seated on the ground, swaying back and forth with sinuous fervor to the rhythm of the song. Fires were burning, leaping high, strangely attuned to the spirit of the night. In the middle of the verse, at my name, I jumped up and out to the middle of the floor.

It was a weird sensation to feel many eyes riveted on me, eyes with savage glee in them as I danced. Down that long line of seated and swaying natives I danced, doing the Charleston, a sketchy movement from the *otea* I had seen at Mauretea and finally a dimly remembered arabesque from Nijinski's *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*, which I had seen years before. I did them all, but it was the Nijinski number with its phallic postures, its veiled though candid contortions, that most impressed my audience.

The gasoline-tin drums pounding with an ever louder and faster frenzy the while, combined with the cello-like sounds the men made with their throats and the women's falsetto, produced a wild barbaric effect. Suddenly some one shrieked, "Maniota!" The dance had gone over. They had given me a native name. I was one of them.

I later learned that the appellation came from my resemblance to the *maniota* plant, which is very slender and whose leaves like slim hands bend easily in the wind.

Much of the wealth of Manga Reva and her sister islands lies in the

lagoons. I should say much of her wealth has come from the lagoons. For the pearl shells were ripped up during Laval's time and after with all the assurance that such bountiful, easily got riches would forever continue.

I have talked with Levy, the retired pearl merchant who now lives in Papeete, and who once lived on Manga Reva on land deeded to him by Maputeoa, the last of the kings He has told me how in the old days a fine pearl could be had for a plug hat or a bottle of rum. To the natives before and during Laval's reign the pearls meant nothing beyond an occasional luxury which was easily to be had by what in their eyes was a shrewd bargaining. For why value a little white object, when there were so many more to be had for the diving in the lagoons? And plug hats, were they not strange and unusual objects the like of which could not be found on their own shores? From far countries these valuables had come, plug hats, rum, American soap, gaily printed calico dress-goods and brass beds, all infinitely more ostentatious and tangible evidences of material prosperity than a handful of soft-skinned lustrous little beads that came out of the sea. Levy says the children of Manga Reva used to play a sort of game much like marbles with good-sized pearls. The kings never wore pearls as ornaments. A necklace of shark's teeth was far more striking to the royal way of thinking.

It must be remembered that the South Sea native, for countless centuries, has had the kindest treatment by Mother Nature. Fruit and vegetables grew wantonly and with little effort on their casually tended plantations. Of fish there was no end. And when Cook left the coffee plant on the Austral and Gambier groups the natives cared for nothing further. Sugar-cane grows easily, only nobody ever thinks about planting it. Clothes? In a climate such as theirs clothes are a trivial matter. During the days of the old kings the women wore skirts made from finely shredded *purau* fiber, which is like yellow silk threads when it is properly prepared, while a woven belt of the same material held the skirt to their shapely bodies. The men wore a short *pareu* of tapa, the beaten bark of the breadfruit tree, or the finer sort from the mulberry tree. Or if a woman felt bored with the same old dress she went out and gathered leaves from the ti plant and made a girdle of them. These, too, were sometimes worn by the men at the feasts. A crown of hibiscus or frangipani, a necklace or two of orange blossoms or the little red orchids of Manga Reva and the style dictators of their ancient world waved the scepter of approval. Of what need gold and jewels, brocades and satins?

So the pearls, having as much value as they did to the white man, yet remained comparatively valueless to the native. And from their own standpoint they were right. A necklace of frangipani or hibiscus holds up in the tropical sunlight against the riotous luxuriance of banana and mango trees. What chance would even the largest pearl necklace have against this competition of hugely designed and highly colored vegetation? After all, nature demands drama, but the drama of natural things woven together with a bold stroke. And on the other hand a necklace of tuberoses or white lilacs

would cause convulsions at one of our own assemblies or coming-out balls. There jewels catch and reflect the light, and come to have a brilliant hard life in keeping with the artificial and exotic splendor of that glittering world.

But now traders' calicoes, the seven standard patterns that every native woman knows by heart, are the fineries that bedeck crone and beauty alike. The missionaries introduced that strange gown known as the Mother Hubbard almost a hundred years ago, so that beautiful bodies might be clumsily shielded from what I have never been able to discover. Morals or lack of them have certainly been unaffected by a few yards of oddly applied cotton cloth. It is curious how beautiful even ugly things can be come with time and usage. I always thrill at the sight of the great-bosomed, broad-hipped matrons of Papeete waiting at the wharf for the entertaining sight of a fresh batch of tourists. Clad in Mother Hubbards of fantastic pattern, black, lavender or brilliant orange, they give the landscape a rich careless note, and in doing so serve a purpose, ultimately and delightfully decorative in its end.

The younger girls make of their few yards of perishable prints a knee-length and sleeveless gown that shows off their sun-browned charms and the budding graciousness of their intriguing beauty to perfection. Of its age this gown is, and practical. And when the girls move proudly and sinuously along the broom road with flowers over their ears or in their black hair, which forms such a magnificent halo for their lovely faces, they are as arresting and beautiful as the early movement and color of a tropic dawn. Beauty ever escapes boundaries that man would set.

Unlimited are the edible fishes that swim in the lagoons of the Gambier and the sea that beats upon her reefs. Lobsters, rock lobsters they call them hereabouts and they are found at night on the reef with the aid of torches, parrot fish, *traou*, mackerel, swordfish, and countless other fishes with names as fantastic as their appearance are delicious either baked in a native oven or broiled over an open fire.

The fish market lies however in the sea. Only once during my stay on Manga Reva were fish offered me for sale, and then for five francs I bought a string of fish that would have been sufficient for ten households. The natives go fishing when they think about it, and usually as a diversion. Like everything else the natives do, fishing is some thing they do for amusement. Light-heartedly they live from day to day, these beautiful two-legged butterflies of the South Seas.

Once in a great while a community fishing spree is ordered, called a Stone Fishing. This is usually at the command of the governor, as during the old days the command came from the king, and the tradition still holds. I imagine it does so because there is so much work and effort necessary for a Stone Fishing that the natives, if left to themselves, would let this magnificent sea pageant be come obsolete.

One day then Doctor Dezoteur gave the command, and the natives started making preparations. For three days every woman on the island, and some of

the men, cut branches from the cocoa-palms and tied them end to end with strings of fiber, thus making of them long festoons which were a sort of natural net. There must have been a quarter of a mile of these when the time came.

The governor, his assistant and I, went out to the reef two miles from Rikitea Harbor and waited. In the distance we could see canoes leaving the island and forming a great semicircle. I knew that the palm branches were strung like nets between them, though at this distance we could not see them They advanced slowly, I am almost tempted to say majestically. Men standing in the canoes beat the water with stones tied to long ropes of pandanus. It is from this that the name Stone Fishing comes.

Looking back on that day I can never remember what became of the time. Perhaps I had become native enough to forget time. But certain it is that by the governor's watch we waited three hours on a bare reef in the sun and scarcely noticed it. There was a sort of irresistible monotony about the inexorably advancing boats that was infinitely exciting.

As the boats came closer I saw that they were not dragging the palm branches behind them like nets, but pushing them ahead, as one might push a wall. No wonder they came slowly! I could see too, even across the water, that the natives were rising to a fever heat of excitement. They shouted more and more frequently to one another and gesticulated wildly.

As the boats came near the reef they drew closer together, but they remained in a semicircle, the two horns of which finally touched the reef, which here had a sand beach. As soon as the water was shallow enough the men deserted the canoes and, leaping into the water, pushed the wall of branches ahead of them with their bodies, at the same time beating the water with their hands and uttering most unearthly yells.

I could not blame the natives for their excitement, for even to me who was only a spectator it was one of the most exciting moments I have ever experienced. We Westerners on the beach were holding our breath, our eyes fixed on the narrow strip of water within the nets. Suddenly it began to boil. A fish jumped out. Then an other! In a moment, as the men with their branches closed in on the beach, it literally rained fish. The white sand was mottled with them. Like wet jewels they flashed and glistened in the sun, leaping and plunging.

The natives by this time were wild with excitement. They threw themselves into the leaping struggling mass and, catching the fish with their hands, waved them triumphantly with appropriate shouts of triumph, or beat them to death on the coral, or even tore them to pieces. I saw one bronze giant named Maho, a red-haired savage, catch a great silver milk mullet in his big fist and, drunk with excitement, tear it to pieces and stuff still quivering bits of flesh into his mouth.

Watching the Stone Fishing that morning I could see what the Polynesians must have been like in the dawn of their culture, before the strange blight was

on them for which civilization is responsible. I could understand their explorations, their battles and conquests. And a great pity was in me.

Of course there was fish enough for every family in the archipelago that day. I had broiled milk mullet for supper, that rarest delicacy of the sea which was once reserved for the king alone.

The only danger in the Gambier comes from the number of sharks that infest these waters. They are not all dangerous. However a triangular fin cutting the water carries the same fearful man-eating suggestion whether it be brown or grayish white. The brown ones are harmless, so I was told, but I never cared to experiment with this piece of information. The natives are fearless, rather fool hardy. During the machine-diving season in Hiku-eru one native could not get rid of a shark which kept circling near him, and finally, his nerves on edge, was seized with the bold idea of riding the shark to the surface! When the shark darted close enough he grabbed at the slippery creature and succeeded in getting a hold somewhere in the rear end of the cannibal of the sea. For a moment he thought all would be well. But soon the shark became entangled in the air-tube and the diver realized that his fate was sealed unless he acted promptly. He gave a frantic signal to be hauled up to the surface, too frantic a signal, for his friends above hauled him in so quickly that the change in water pressure was too sudden. When they took off his helmet blood was spurting from his ears, mouth and nose. It was only after an hour that he was sufficiently out of danger to tell what had happened.

The fear of sharks is an ever-present one in the diving grounds. The natives have a theory that by keeping the body in constant motion the shark will be frightened away, as a shark will not attack a moving object. That is of course the theory, but I have heard too many ghastly stories about South Sea sharks from eye-witnesses to have faith in a shark's attention to the Queensbury rules of the game.

Sharks or no sharks the natives, during the naked-diving season, dive every day, and once in a great while the dramatic find occurs. There is no telling who will make it. Mytea, who lived up the road from me, a hard-working native, careful, honest in all his dealings and a good Protestant, never in his whole life, and he is now forty, found a pearl worth over fifty dollars. On the other hand Nanon, Yo's cousin and Utato's favorite son, for his sixteen years was the worst scalawag on the island. And Nanon found - But first I must tell you about Nanon himself.

He was a sort of attaché at my house, since he and Yo, whose mother had presented him to me, were inseparables. Nanon was so impishly attractive that I put up with him in spite of the fact that he was totally undependable. When Yo was off to visit his mother, the school-teacher at Akamaru, Nanon stayed with me, and at any time when both his foster or adopted mother and Tiare, his real mother, were angry with him he would sneak in at night with his blanket and curl up, chuckling about slipping through their fingers. He knew they would not invade the white man's house in the middle of the night. When

he was in their good graces he would tell his foster-mother, with whom he lived, "Well, I'm off to sleep with Maniota," which was a cloak for the night's adventure. This usually concerned one Peehow, a youngster of sixteen and not a bad-looking girl in her way. Sailors had long ago played upon her vanity and love of silly trinkets, so that she was quite amenable to reason on a petting party. Yo and Nanon shared her charms, either alternately or together. I have often had the two of them, ostensibly visiting me, slip out in the middle of the night, and heard nothing further from the rascals until I smelled coffee in the morning. There they would be, virtue written all over their faunlike faces. When irate mothers, foster and real alike, came down the path, having heard of the doings of the night via cocoanut radio, the smooth rascals would be industriously engaged in sweeping up the floor and pouring out my coffee with the attention I have only received from a certain Santa Fe dining-car steward. They would assure mamas one and all that they had been with me every minute since they left the house, and would turn to me with innocent eyes and bland expressions in which virtue was a little overdone, and ask me to corroborate their fairy-tales which of course I always did. Sometimes it didn't work, and then Yo, who was a little too transparent in his lies, always got the *purau* switch, while Nanon would disappear and only show up when the entire city of Rikitea was out on a searching party. And to top it all he would sneak the girl away with him on these runaway trips from domestic wrath!

But never had a boy more charm when he wanted some thing than Nanon. His big soft eyes were fairly melting as he listened attentively to everything that was said to him. His nimble fingers arranged flowers for the feast or gathered oranges for breakfast. And all the while he was planning some new and intriguing bit of deviltry.

So much for Nanon. Now to return to the pearl-diving season which was more than half over, and nothing of extraordinary value found, when the find occurred. Nanon made little or no effort to dive. It takes years to learn properly. By the time he is thirty he will be a proficient diver, but at sixteen he was the veriest novice. Mytea, that honest man, is on the other hand an excellent diver. But Lady Luck never rewards industry and charm alike.

Nanon and another boy a little older had been out in the canoe all day playing about, and after an entire day's splashing and diving succeeded in bringing home one medium-sized shell. All the other natives had their canoes half filled, and of course boos and haws greeted the two mermen as they sheepishly but light-heartedly held up the one shell which Nanon had managed to pry loose from the coral. However when it was opened, our rolled a thirty five-carat white pearl of the purest luster!

A pearl of such size and quality had nor been found in the lagoons of Manga Reva for over half a century, and the story of its finding will be told from one dwindling generation to another, as the story of Ab Soy's pearl, which was found in Maru-tea about twenty years ago, is told. Nanon's fame is

secure, even though, as I write this, his fortune is being squandered away on the gaieties of Papeete. But before he left he gave some of it to Utato, his father, and undoubtedly he will inherit it back again, and anyway, who cares? He is a true pagan, and I always feel that the ancient gods of Polynesia are not too fond of) modern religions and that when they can they reward the pagans.

The story of Ab Soy's pearl, found by a young Manga Revan named Heiva, and the pearl's adventures before it found a permanent resting-place in Paris, as well as Heiva's own prodigality, are still café talk in Papeete. Over rum punches at the Mariposa or the Cercle Bouganville the casual visitor is sure to hear the story at some time during his visit.

Heiva, together with other young bucks, went from Manga Reva to Maru-tea for the diving season. One evening, in one of the shells he had brought back, the old native woman who opened his shells for him found a pearl of perhaps forty carats. It was quite perfect in shape but bad in color and spotty. Heiva, who had the universal human feeling that when things look too rosy there must be a catch in them somewhere, thought the pearl must be *too* big and therefore could not be of much value. So he offered it to young Palmer, the son of an English pearl trader, who happened to be camped at Maru-tea awaiting the results of the season. Palmer looked at it, and Hevia said he would sell it to him for "*A pitï tausane* (dollar) *tara frani,*" about ten thousand francs when francs were five for a dollar. Palmer, not being a gambler, refused it and has never since recovered his equanimity in the matter. For Hevia set sail on the next boat for Manga Reva and sought out Utato who is famed for his knowledge of pearls as well as his skill in peeling them. He can peel a pearl, by removing infinitesimally fine layers of its substance, and so eliminate the outer badly colored film. Usually this brings to light a pearl of exquisite color and luster. His process, a secret, I never was permitted to watch, although he peeled two small pearls for me. In the case of Hevia's pearl, after it had been reduced layer by layer, much as an onion might be reduced, to about five carats less than the original size, a blue pearl was disclosed, which was destined to be known as the finest blue pearl in existence, and to be proudly displayed by a great firm of Paris jewelers who however never offer it for sale, the pearl being a symbol of their prosperity and financial security.

Utato advised Hevia not to sell it for less than thirty thousand French, meaning one hundred and fifty thousand francs. But the late Ab Soy, an astute old Chinese merchant, offered Hevia twenty thousands dollars or one hundred thousand francs, and he accepted it. Hevia's young wife wisely urged him to buy land, which he did, and then against her wishes he departed for Papeete to buy brass bedsteads and gay dress-goods for his *vahine*.

Then came Hevia's triumphal arrival in Papeete and his two-weeks drunk, during which time he and his friends disported themselves in twenty automobiles and drank all the liquor they could hold. At the end of the two weeks most of the francs had passed out of his pockets into those of the

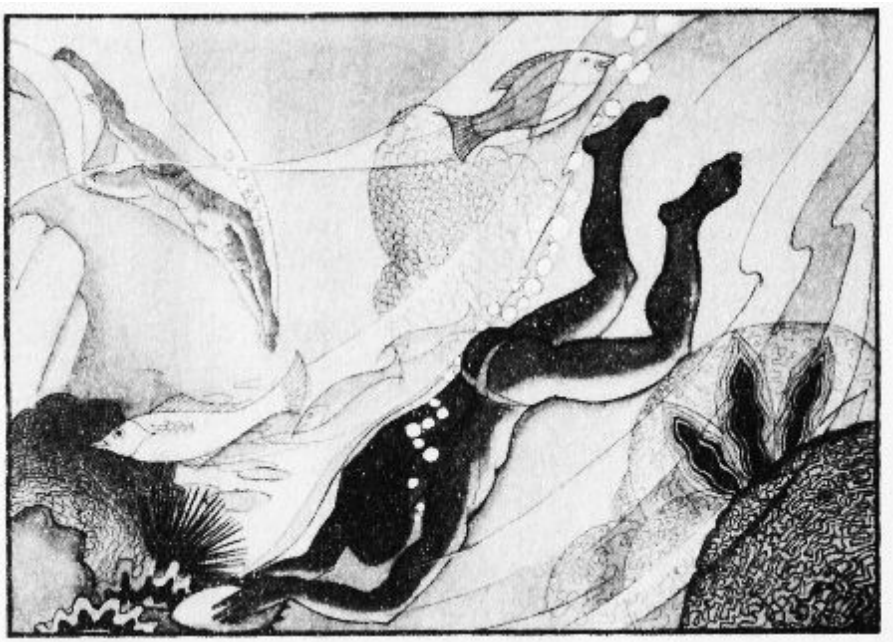
Chinese merchants. Enough remained for a brass bed, some dress-goods and a small supply of rum, after buying which he reembarked for Manga Reva, a sadder but no wiser man. For he would have done the whole thing over again if he had ever had the luck to make an other such find.

The beauty of living day by day in Polynesia makes, for a painter, an irresistible existence, there where simplicity is in itself exotic, and the wildest exoticism is simple and childlike. And the ancient spirit that animates the whole world is the secret excitement which stirs the spirit and intrigues the senses.

Hevia goes forth to dive, and Nanon . . . Tiare mumbles her beads stupidly at the slightest story of the supernatural. . . . Marcel slides through the hibiscus to her relatives with the white man's sugar....Tom's big pathetic eyes are searching, searching for the ultimate freedom of spirit, if not of body .... Out in the lagoon great bodies flash in the sun as the quivering mother-of-pearl like fish are speared in the pageant of Stone Fishing. . . . It is night and Ti-Ti shyly waits in the shadows of the *purau* tree for her first lover.... Near by the water laps gently the feet of ancient mountains, and as the moon rises the *tupapaus* come forth .... Cocoanuts fall with a crashing thud in the jungles, and the centipedes make curious noises, like crickets, in the violet silence. . . . The perfume and odors of a Polynesian night stir the blood.

And all this is only the native way of living.

It literally rained fish



Nanon brought up one medium-sized shell

CHAPTER III
THE LOST CONTINENT

HE Island of Moving Mountains,"* the name that the ancient Manga Revans had given their largest island, puzzled me and I hunted for a clue-to this very odd title, but found no solution until, through the help of the indispensable Tom I heard about Rouriki.

* "Fruit of Cerbera" is the name given to Manga Reva in *Ancient Tabiti,* by Teuira Henry, published by the Bishop Museum of Honolulu. The literal translation of the old Manga Revan name is, however, based on the *Grammaire et Dictionnaire Mangareviens*, published by Brain-le-Comte, for the Catholic missionaries of the Gambier Archipelago.

Now translating literally from the ancient tongue of Manga Reva: Manga or Maga means Mountain, Reva means moving land. This name originally belonged, so Huahine told Tom, to Mount Duff, the name which the Protestant missionaries who preceded Laval gave to the mountain, renaming it after their ship or its commander, I have forgotten which. So Mount Duff originally meant in the native tongue, the Moving Mountain (Manga Reva). The island was called by the ancients after the name that had been given by their forefathers to the mountain; so literally translated the name of the island means "The island of the moving mountain," or as Makota is almost as lofty as its twin, Manga Reva, "the island of the moving mountains."

But why? What was the reason for this curious name?

I found the solution oddly enough because of my liking for guavas. They were scarce in the village; in fact, I was told that the season for guavas was over. But Tom, who always came to my rescue in time of need, suggested we try Rouriki, a spot of which I had not yet heard.

Following Tom, I climbed through the jungle at the back of Rikitea, by a trail that began near my house. This path at a shore distance crossed the old war canal which at this point curved distinctly inland.

Past Mytea's little *ni'au* and pandanus shack, whose "one" room harbored

not only himself but his portly *vahine* and their lovely twin daughters, Ti-Ti and Nga as well, we walked through a *papaya* grove and were just about to plunge into the heart of the jungle when Tom put his finger to his lips and, looking back over his shoulder, warned me to stay where I was. Puzzled by his expression and action, I obeyed his hint, but followed his gaze.

Then I realized the need for absolute quiet, for as lovely a picture as I have ever seen lay before us. About fifteen yards from our path was the pool which ended the inland meanderings of the war canal, where in war-times the canoes were all hidden for safety.

Under an enormous mango tree a young girl was standing and I recognized Nga, one of the twins. Her head was thrown back while she tossed her purple black hair about with her slender hands-sparkling drops of water reflecting the sun became phosphorescent against the black green of the jungle. Her slim golden tanned body (the twins were fifteen) was still glistening from her bath. She had wrapped a red and white *pareu*, covered with sprawling figures, around her waist with a careless gesture, leaving her exquisite little breasts uncovered.

Curiously enough the native women are extremely modest under the influence of the missionaries, and never wear the native garment unless it is adjusted to cover their breasts. In the old days a *purau* skirt was suspended from a fiber belt which held it firmly to their supple waists.

But the sight which made me hold my breath for fear of making the slightest sound, was not Nga but Ti-Ti, who was in the pool splashing water over her slim shoulders and occasionally playfully tossing it in the direction of her sister. Almost as slender as the curved stems that supported the giant apia leaves at the farther end of the pool Ti-Ti was a vision to behold. While I watched her a slim arm darted to the water and she grabbed a big scarlet hibiscus flower that was drifting slowly past, and coquettishly placed it over her right ear, a token meaning in Tahitian sign language that she was looking for a lover.

Her sister pointed her finger and doubling up with glee, mischievously laughed and gasped, "I know who he is - the *popau* (white man)."

Tom and I looked at each other; Tom's eyes twinkled as he watched me redden.

Ti-Ti made a gesture of mock indifference and dived into the pool. She came up scattering the water all about her, flinging drops that looked in the sun like millions of pearls and diamonds.

In the center of this fountain and against the intense yellow of the *purau* flowers back of her on the opposite bank, her slim body, splashed with lavender shadows of the mango leaves overhead, seemed made of some ethereal unsubstantial essence. She epitomized the Polynesian Eve (Ina). The dawn of life, yes, even the first dawn of the world itself, lingered in her black untroubled eyes that slanted upward ever so slightly. Her little scarlet mouth opened with delight as she laughed from joy over the morning's bath.

For a second of time I seemed to feel the beginning of all creation. The golden body before me made me gasp both at its perfection and the enchantment cast over me by the magic of its beauty. I trembled as though stung by the cold spray she was tossing so wantonly and carelessly about her.

I must have said something in my confusion at the vision before me. For suddenly, like young fawns startled at an unexpected noise in the forest, they both became motionless as statues frozen gestures more beautiful than the exotic flowers that hung above them. In a flash Ti-Ti caught sight of me and with a choked cry, waved her slender hand frantically to Nga who, grabbing a blue and white *pareu* that fluttered from a branch above her tossed it quickly to her sister.

Ti-Ti wrapped the *pareu* with trembling fingers about her shoulders and hid her face in her black hair as lustrous as a night filled with blue stars.

At the sight of her embarrassment, Tom and I were stricken with contrition and quietly turned and continued on our way. Tom called back, "Angry at the *popau?*" We waited for her reply. She took her time, the minx, but finally her voice softly repeated the reassuring native phrase for all mishaps in life, "A*ïta peapeau*.-(It doesn't matter.)"

We had been forgiven.

"The most beautiful girl in the village," said Tom, "and strangely enough she has never listened to the sailors' lies or joined the rather exciting and none too innocent parties the children her age have out on the beach."

The climb grew steeper, and while Tom easily swung on his way up the slippery trail I scrambled and grabbed at overhanging branches to keep myself from sprawling on my face.

Oranges lay all over the ground, their splendor nearly concealed by giant king ferns that gracefully bent low their plume-like foliage. Great twisted trunks of the mammoth *mape* (native chestnut) tree arose, at times on both sides of us. In their shade nothing grew at all. The ground, however, was covered with the large yellow-green and slightly flattened fruit that held the chestnuts.

After a steep climb we left the jungle and found the going much easier. We were now on an ancient road that began near the great *maraë* close by the cathedral and wound its way around the base of Mount Duff, rising slowly to the point where we had emerged from the jungle. Here the road commenced a steep ascent, but steep as it was, it was almost the only way of climbing the mountain from the village side. However, the natives had laid stones end to end forming a crude pavement and the going was much easier than through the jungle.

While we climbed, the magnificent panorama that lay behind us left me breathless. Below us the jungle swept in opulent curves following the lines of the fronds of the cocoanut trees to the beach. Far, far below, at the very base of the jungle, stretched the tiny city of Rikitea, to the lagoon. The twin towers and red roofs of the cathedral stood out dearly from the trees around it; near

by, fluttering on its flag-pole above the governor's wide verandaed mansion, the tricolor of France made a tiny patch of color.

Maniota's plum-colored fare was nearly hidden by *purau* trees, and occasionally peering out from the trees that grew both inside and outside their walls, the tenantless houses gave a gray note of mystery and desertion to an otherwise gay and brilliant landscape.

Far off toward the horizon the twin peaks of Akena arose from the lagoon like tops of submerged pyramids. Beyond the reef lay the ocean a mist, delft-blue in color, ending at the horizon.

We were now on the ridge that sharply divided the island, and standing on a natural platform we could see the valley of Rouriki on the side opposite Rikitea. Right in the center of the crude stone road here at the top was an enormous piece of coral-almost circular in shape. I stood on it.

"That," said Tom, "was the public crier's rock in the old days. When he sighted canoes or ships coming through the pass, he blew his conch-shell which from this point could be heard faintly down in either valley."

Unlike the panorama behind us, most of the country on this side was covered only with the tall *aeho* grass. The view of the lagoon was as magnificent here as on the other side. Blue, emerald, mauve and violet interplayed beneath the arched blue of the austral skies. However, down in the desolate valley below us only a few cocoa-palms flaunted their sparse plumes. "Only a few left after a fire that once swept this valley," said Tom. At one point, however, clutching the sheer precipitous sides of Mount Duff was repeated the contorted jungle fantasy which so wantonly spread over the valley of Rikitea.

"That is Rouriki," said Tom, pointing to this isolated patch of jungle that tried in vain to climb with long green fingers the almost perpendicular walls of the mountain above it.

"There we shall find your guavas, Bob," said he, "if native superstition speaks true. They have a funny superstition about this jungle. It never burns though fires have swept the valley many times. In this jungle are cyclopean ruins and these are shrouded in such mystery that no native will ever go near them. It is supposed by them to be a kind of a garden of Eden where fruit and flowers grow at all seasons of the year-and yet the natives are so afraid of the place that they would starve sooner than go in and gather breadfruit when they are hungry."

Before penetrating the jungle I took one last look at the high peak of Mount Duff. No matter from what point of vantage one saw it, it seemed like a great empty high backed throne.

Tom stood quietly watching the clouds roll above the topmost peak and between long-drawn-out puffs of his cigarette said, "Bob, the natives have a story of how in the old days a great canoe rested on the seat of that giants' chair up yonder great wings were tightly clasped to its sides. When the King and his warriors or Parquicala and his satellites wished to travel they stepped

into it and by means of some of their magic caused the wings to spread out from the sides of the canoe and so sail like birds into the sky.

"Legend tells that they traveled to Pitcairn, to the Austral group and even, some say, to the Cook Islands which lie to the northwest of Manga Reva.

"Over on Tara-Vai lives an old native who owns a copy or model of this magic canoe. It is carved, as most all the very oldest work was carved, from coral, The wings suggest the Egyptians, they lie flat along the sides."

"Like the hawk wings of Horus," I quickly added. "And, Tom," I continued, "there is identically the same legend among the Mayans. Their ancient god-ancestors came in winged boats. Perhaps the story of the Lost Continent is true. Darwin, you know, who traveled for several years among the different island groups in the South Seas, said the islands were tops of a submerged continent that stretched its broken back from the Americas, North and South, to Asia."

There are some who believe the first civilization that built temples, palaces and roads and first carved idols was established on a continent that once existed in the Pacific. This continent, so one writer records, was divided in three parts by rivers or canals and was inhabited by some sixty four million souls. He based his theory on the Naacal Tablets which he found in Burmah. These describe in picture writing the fall of the great continent, which was called, according to Churchward, Mu.

Brown, in his more authoritative book, *The Riddle of the Pacific*, does not disprove the theory of the Lost Continent, but in most of his chapters leans strongly toward a firm belief, based on ancient legends and a limited amount of scientific data, of the existence of such a continent.

The inscriptions on ancient Mayan temples in Yucatan, the legends of the Incas, and the fabulous and gigantic ruins of that deserted city on Panape and Kusaie Islands in the Carolinas supposed to be a fragment of the lost continent, all lead the imagination toward the strangest theory in the world.

"Even the story of the winged canoe recalls the Biblical story of the Ark.

"Perhaps the mysterious Mount Ararat was really located in the Pacific. Who knows but that it was the Ark of the Bible that once rested on Manga Reva's lofty summit?"

Tom was enthralled with such a fantastic and flamboyant theory, as contorted and monstrous as the jungle there in front of us.

"If you believe all that, wait, old man, until you have seen the ruins in there," said he, pointing into the jungle. For we had now reached the little path made by the goats that branched from the main road and wandering through the *aeho* entered the jungle.

Through the pandanus trees that here grew to exag gerated dimensions and the lofty *mape* we wandered and clambered over huge scones that had fallen from their original positions. A landslide from the towering mountain above us buried, long before Tupa came to the islands, part of the Cyclopean structures.

Tom stopped to light a cigarette.

"It is a pagan place and the spirits work their will there," said he. "Certainly no native would touch the fruit even if they are still growing among the ruins. But for me, I never feel evil in the jungles of Rouriki as I feel it on Aga-kaouitai. The place is pleasantly sad, an ancient primeval place haunted by horned things, half man, half animal. The spot too has moods. Some days it is maddening in its gaiety, in its abandon to the beauty of living, to sunlight, to the rioting of the senses. Other days it is sad, like nothing I have ever experienced. The slant-eyed Polynesian fauns mourn for something lost, but wha that thing may be I do not know. Perhaps these are the ancient souls of the lost continent that still cling to the few fragments of their once marvelous country. What ever it is there is nothing sinister in its purpose."

I stared up at a wall built by Goliaths.

"This was the fortress," said Tom.

Suddenly I knew why the mountain had been names the moving mountain. It was named from the landslides that had undoubtedly continued for untold centuries. A large part of the mountain had fallen and buried most of the great fortresses.

In my excitement over my theory I talked so fast that I was incoherent. I had to explain it twice before Tom saw what I was driving at.

He cocked his head to one side, half closed one eye, a characteristic gesture, hesitated and then said, "Yes, Bob, I believe you are right for once," he added teasingly.

I could not make much of the great ruins which lie in vast disorder, but there was evidence of much the same method of construction that appears in the fortresses of Rapa, which however are better preserved than these fall en fortifications of some vanished conquerors of Manga Reva.

The sun feebly filtered down through the green leaves. Silent were the walls about us. No wind blew from the sea, and when a dried breadfruit leaf fluttered down from some height above us the impression of occult forces was strong with us. Sound plays curious tricks on the senses.

Above the dark symbols of man's physical impermanence grew guava trees of such luxuriance and plenty that the spattered fruit from the overloaded branches made brilliant the uneven carpet at their feet. Hanging above us and about us were unbelievable quantities of ripe and luscious guavas, as large as pomegranates.

"Odd, isn't it, Bob?" said Tom. "There isn't a guava tree on this archipelago with a single fruit left on it. And look at these!"

We climbed the trees and shook the branches. le rained pink and yellow guavas all over the hillside. Some of them fell in the deep crevices between the cut rock of the ruins, others, stopped by banks of giant king ferns, collected there in piles of glowing color.

Drunk with the morning and smeared with scarlet guava juice, I felt as never before the tangible presence of the Polynesian Pan. It rippled through

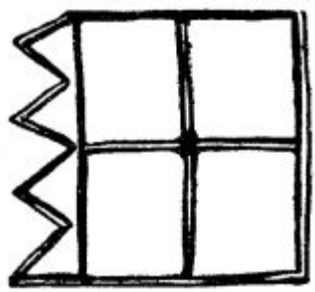
the streaked sunlight, in the sound of falling lush fruit, in the lightness that held us up as though we swam in a pool of wine. Gay half-mocking forces were just behind us. The wind made whispering music among the bamboo. I knew that Rouriki was haunted.

Having eaten our fill, and collected all the guavas we could carry, we wandered our uneven way over the ruins in that great primeval forest, until we came to the site of the great altar.

One may still trace the seven terraces of the great *maraë*, or altar, of Rouriki. The terraces are extensive, the greatest perhaps one hundred twenty-five feet long, and the least twelve feet by eighteen. They range from twenty feet in height, which is the first, to about nine feet in height, which is the topmost terrace. They are one above another, in diminishing order, and have evidently been made by building three walls, with the side of the mountain forming the fourth. These walls were filled in places with scones and coral and finally a pavement of smooth stones was laid on top.

Whether these terraces were necessary as part of the mystic scheme underlying the ancient religion I do not know, but I do know that in all the records purporting to refer to the lost continent of Mu the number seven is repeated over and over again. There are supposed to have been seven cities and seven attributes to their god, and numerous other manifestations of this number which man has always found so mysterious.

The scone chair or seat of the high priest still rests on the topmost terrace. Near by is the upright stone slab to which it was customary in the old but historic days of Manga Reva to tie the corpses, and which may have been used for the same purpose in Rouriki. No carving is visible save on one great stone beneath the seat of the high priest, and that is in the form of two crossed lines, bordered on one side by a design of zigzag lines, thus:



The grooves of the cross, which were deeply cut, have with time and exposure grown deeper, until the stone is cracking in four parts.

Little else remains above ground, save that there are many pavements and

little paths made by joining fine slabs of white coral together. The pavements are numerous and are supposed to have been the site of the ancient palaces. Most of them are lost under the thick dry *aeho* grass that has accumulated for ages on this spot and which refuses to burn for some reason best known to it self. The *aeho* is burned, either through accident or de sign, about once a year, all over the hills and valleys around this strange jungle which harbors such ancient ruins. But never will the fire penetrate this jungle. It seems as though fire were not powerful enough to combat the strange spirits that rule the secrets of the sacred jungle, secrets which they do not wish revealed.

However during the reign of the cannibal kings this mystic spot had its uses, which were so human that I have always lingered over the place with a tenderness for its vanished emotions which will overcome the best of us when we know the underlying meaning of a place. When the queen was about to give birth to a child she was taken to Rouriki, together with all the king's household. Even the omnipotent high priest of all the Gambier went with her. And all patiently awaited the new addition to the household of the king. Whether the child was a boy or a girl made no difference in the elaborate ceremonies which took place on the altar of the ancients.

The high priest, with his attendant priests, made elaborate sacrifices to Tu and his satellites and to the ancient gods who had ruled over the sacred spot, though who these gods may have been the priests knew no more than we do. It was believed that some of the wisdom and power of the ancients thereby entered into the child, and made him more fit to govern his people. Thus the child was made to a degree sacred, and removed from the common run of events and circumstance to which the rest of the inhabitants of the archipelago were subject.

Only once was a child really deified, and this came about in the following manner.

"Certain false priests," said the old native who told me the story in a curious jargon which I have translated into English and I noticed that though he was now a Christian he was very positive concerning truth and falsehood in the old religion-"servers of an idol which was being neglected in favor of the true services dedicated to Tu, cast about to find some way of bettering their fortunes and increasing the prestige of their almost deserted god. The chief of these priests came upon a plan by which a message should come to them through their god that the child about to be born would be a boy. And moreover the spirit of a god would inhabit the body of the future prince. This revelation was duly made and carried to the king, who was immediately impressed and ordered many gifts of food and garments to be made to the false god.

"It turned out even as the false priests had predicted. The child was a boy. More, a certain sign-by some miracle which occurs only to born gamblers appeared on the child, a peculiar birthmark. The little prince was then heralded as a god, and even the true priests were forced to agree. So the infant

grew to manhood known as a living god."

After the ceremonies invoking the aid of the ancient gods for a royal infant, he was taken, with the queen an her attendants, up to the top of Mount Duff, which rise directly back of the jungle of Rouriki. Here they lived for a period of six months, before they were brought down to Rikitea, the capital. I was told that food for the household of the *petit prince* on the mountain, delicate little clams, breadfruit and the finest of the bananas, was conveyed by means of a living chain from the sea to the summit of the mountain, baskets of food being handed from man to man until they reached the hands of the servants at the top. Even to this day, near the ruins of the House of the Little Prince, may be seen the crumbling shells of the delicate clams.

Rouriki, with its strange overtones, took a firm hold of my imagination. Often I returned to it, wandering over its ruins, sketching or measuring. And one day as I sat resting in its almost supernatural calm, watching the flecks of sunlight through the trees of the jungle, a curious vision or obsession came to me, sweeping me away from my own age and knowledge. Such things happen to many in the dream-haunted groves of the South Seas. Perhaps the soul of ancient Polynesia, going back as it does to such remote and magical days, is far more of a reality than we realize, and so is dangerous to tamper with unless with reverence and infinite care and attention. Going native is the usual form of the obsession, insanity is the more tragic form. In my own experience I know of two cases of the latter. But for me, since my childhood, certain things which were terrifying to others have seemed as natural as air to me.

So as I sat, watching the sun-flecks through the trees, I felt a sense of detachment from myself and my body come over me. The light seemed to change, and with it my power of seeing. The great trees seemed to melt and shrivel. They were gone. Stone palaces rose. The rocks fell back into place and the great altar on its seven terraces stood out whole and clear.

On the topmost terrace, seated on the great throne, was an austere figure, tattooed from head to foot. Back of him stood three great stone idols, wide-eyed, their legs doubled under them, their great clumsy hands placed on their stone stomachs with a gesture as conventional as the arms of the Egyptian kings that rest so straightly on their legs. On lower terraces were seated figures. First were rows of old men, tattooed also, but not so extravagantly as the high priest. They sat on their haunches in that tireless posture purely Polynesian. No white man can do it for long without acute discomfort. Back of the old men stood the young men, handsome youths with great broad shoulders, narrow waists and beautiful full-curved thighs and legs. They carried flat spears shaped somewhat like a young banana leaf.

Near by a great fire was slowly cooling. In a deep pit the white-hot stones sent up a terrific heat-lay the body of a man wrapped in breadfruit leaves. He was slowly roasting for the feast. The drums were beating steadily.

Suddenly some of the men began to make noises in their throats and chests which sounded not unlike the notes of a cello. Then the young men

began to sing, a strangely beautiful song, rising in different keys to a curious climax. One youth alone ended the chorus on a falsetto note. Utato told me later that they were singing the *peri peri hymene*, an ancient song sung at the cannibal feasts while the victim was roasting.

Again the scene wavered, kaleidoscoped, disappeared. I had a sense of passing backward through untold centuries. Before me rose a great country. I seemed to see cities form, roads leading to them, and over these roads passed caravans and men herding goats and sheep, sheep different from any I had ever seen before.

Far away beside a wide river rose a city greater than any other, a huge city designed on Gargantuan lines. Walls melted before me and I was walking on wide smoothly paved streets, bordered by long buildings guarded at each corner by tall pyramidal structures.

I entered one of them and found myself in a roofless enclosure a thousand feet in length, with a lofty building at the end farthest from me. On their faces in the enclosure were thousands upon thousands of people. The last rays of the sun, which was setting, struck upon a great slab of some silver-shining metal, entirely carved with geometric forms. The rays struck too on a great sculptured figure that stood on a pedestal near by. This figure was without arms.

Slowly from a magnificent doorway in the building at the end of the enclosure emerged a solitary figure, literally covered with blazing jewels. On his head was a tiara of white diamonds, surrounded by stones of a deep red, and forming the same symbol as that carved on the rock at Rouriki. Music came from some unseen source, great throbbing drums, vibrating with sounds like those made by musical rattles.

The walls of the enclosure melted from my sight. Night had come and the twisted domes of this vast city reflected the cold blue light of the moon. The squat monstrous pillars supporting heavy lintels gleamed dully in the moonlight. In the gardens of a great palace pools caught the flickering lights reflected from torches held by red haired slaves. The figure that shone so resplendently at the temple ceremony was now clad only in a cloak of some coarse fibrous material. At his coming all persons in the garden fell on their faces, save only the slaves who held the torches. These averted their heads and eyes. For this was the great priest-ruler of the lost continent, whose title perhaps was Ra Mu, the most powerful monarch of the entire world.

Again the vision disappeared and I was back in the jungle of Rouriki. The sketch I had been trying to make of the ruined altar lay at my feet, an almost incoherent mass of muddy color. Soniosa, my dog, was nervously sleeping beside me. I remembered what Tom had once said to me: "Funny thing, Bob. I don't know what to make of it, but I always seem to be somewhere else when I am at Rouriki. Dreams, day-dreams I guess! I wonder if I will go batty if I keep coming here."

The question of the races who now inhabit the South Sea islands is a

perennially interesting one to me and I have listened to endless discussions about the relations between them. All the old Polynesian languages in their pure state, which, alas, are dying out rapidly in favor of a vile jargon of mixed tongues, seem to have been derived from the same source. The ancient languages of Tahiti, Manga Reva, the Paumotus and Hawaii were much alike.

There are other and more suggestive traces too. I was impressed, though I am no great student of languages, when I found that in the pure Manga Revan many words are exactly the same as those in the ancient Egyptian tongue. "Ra" in the Manga Revan dictionary means the sun, the period of a day, and various other things pertaining thereto, just as it did in ancient Egypt.

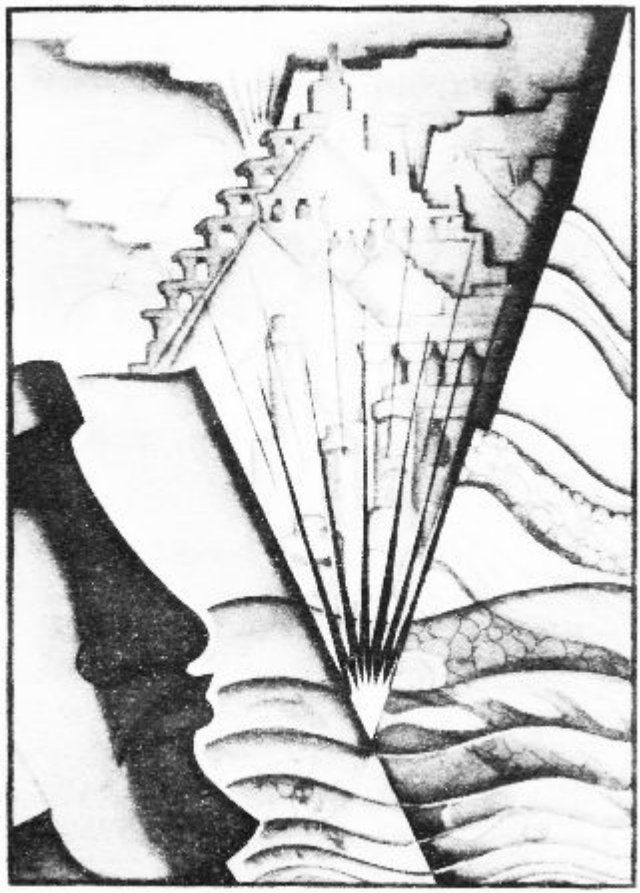
Racially one occasionally finds almost pure Egyptian types when cruising about in the South Seas. Nearly all the men have the wide shoulders and narrow waists we associate with dwellers by the Nile. But it was the features I meant more particularly in drawing the comparison. They have the same high cheek-bones, the same lips, the upper of which is curved like a bow and reaches its highest arc just in the center below the nostrils, the long nose with its flattened nostrils, and the same eyes that so slightly slant upward at the ends. The eyes moreover are oftentimes uncanny in their resemblance to those eyes made from ivory circles set in ebony that one finds in the ancient Egyptian statues.

The story of the lost continent is complete in itself, either as a fantasy for dreamers or a new field for men of science. It does not in any way contradict the historical records of the Polynesian races. The best scientific opinion now believes that they belonged to a white race originally settled in the Mediterranean basin, which would account for the resemblance to the Egyptians. From there they were driven by economic or war pressure on to the shores of the Asiatic mainland and finally to the Asiatic Archipelago. Even here they might not tarry but were driven out by the ever-increasing numbers of the Malay races, about 400 B.C., to the islands called Fiji and Samoa. This, called the Protoa Samoan emigration, was followed by the final emigration of the Polynesian race in about 200 A.D., when they were finally thrown off by their unwilling subject races. And so the Tongafiti or final emigration scattered the Polynesians to the far corners of the South Sea parallelogram.

The natives themselves have a colorful legend of this last voyage chronicled by Queen Maraü of Tahiti. They set out, so runs the story, a thousand great canoes together, each holding about a hundred people. By day they kept track of one another by sight and the sounds of beating drums, and at night they burned flares, each of which glowed across the watery waste like an eye from home. As each new island was sighted one canoe, or more if the island were large, left the fleet to explore. If these explorers found the island habitable they signaled to the fleet to proceed without them. Sad partings those must have been!

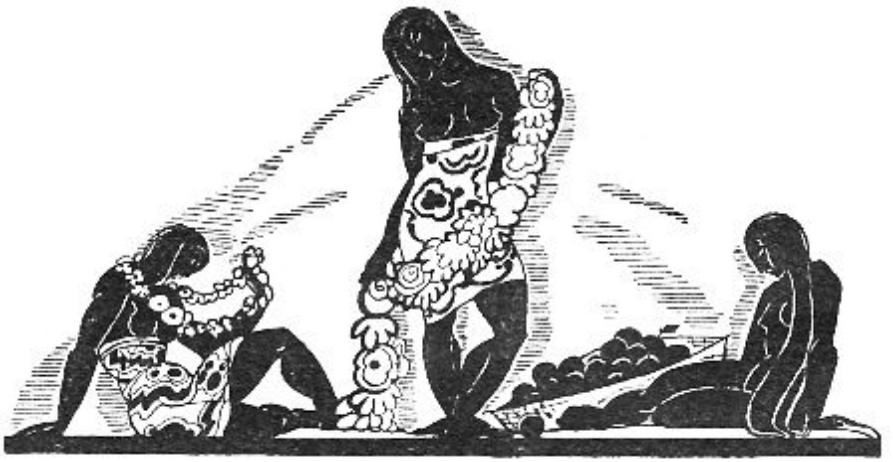
Perhaps they found on the islands a certain number of the descendants of the people of the lost continent. Almost certainly they found a few people of

what the scientists call an "undifferentiated" negro stock which had drifted across from Australia. But the ancient spirit that was waiting for them soon claimed these gentle wanderers as its own, and now the twilight of the Age of Gold is near at hand and its scary nearly completed. The Age of Steel with its drama of inventive magic supplants the spirit of elemental powers and its children, the Polynesians.



The destruction of Lemuria

CHAPTER IV
HONORÉ LAVAL, THE MAD PRIEST



RUINED Spanish city on an almost inaccessible Polynesian island; crumbling pagan altars side by side with churches now as disintegrated as they, yet built with stones torn from their terraces; a great cathedral which has been called "a Notre Dame lost in the jungle." There are too a convent, a monastery and schools, their roofless chambers filled with sprawling tropical plants and creeping parasitic things. The mango, mape, orange and lime struggling to escape the choking, clinging vanilla, coffee and coral vines. Palaces of the last native ruler, King Maputeoa, wharves, coral triumphal arches; and beyond these are lengthy staircases that lead to terraces on which are houses of stone and coral with walls three feet thick; mansions for the priests; and on the island of Akena a lovely columned belvedere that would not be out of place in the gardens of Versailles. All of these with few exceptions are in ruins. The immense cathedral still stands in a state of perfect preservation. It is three times as large as the cathedral in Papeete which was built at a later date and boasts several thousand Catholic communicants, while barely one hundred forty are left to worship in this "Lost Cathedral," as the remainder of the population, perhaps thirty in number, are now Protestants. Such are the strange records that the silent and clumsy stones of the Gambier have left behind them.

Three times the rocks of The Forgotten Islands speak.

In the Valley of Rouriki, in a jungle which tries unsuccessfully to climb a sheer mountain wall, are great rocks and Cyclopean terraces. These were once a fortress, a temple or altar, and palaces. Melancholy and faint echoes these, I believe, of the lost continent, the only ruins on the archipelago to which even native tradition can assign no builders. If they speak, their words are lost amid the enfolding ages that surround their voices. Yet it seems to me that their meaning is clear. These are the first stones.

There are next the ruined *maraës*, or altars, of the archipelago, many of these, in many places. More clearly these speak, for here we are helped by tradition, first of the worship of elemental forces, then of the Polynesian gods, and especially of the great god Tu. These are the second stones.

And finally the stones of the ruined Spanish city speak, and terrible are many of its words, for the stones were cemented with the blood of a beautiful

race and the words are tragically clear. They speak of an attempt by a religious fanatic to force an ancient race overnight into the mold of an alien civilization, and of the inevitable tragedy that followed.

Tom and I sat under the shadow of Maputeoa's tomb, high on the red hill directly under the towering heights of Mount Duff. This was the ruin, with its tower pointing like a gray finger to the blue skies, which I had seen on the day of my arrival. About us crumbling coral tombs of Maputeoa's nephews and nieces leaned amid the straggling hibiscus growth. Epistles in the ancient Manga Revan dialect gave the lineage and virtues of these princes and princesses. Below us the lagoon stretched, gayer than a peacock's tail, to the violet horizon. A tiny canoe with a triangular sail, looking like a one-winged moth, fluttered before the wind on its way to the twin peaks of Akena.

Moodily Tom broke the silence: "From where we sit it all looks as it must have looked before Laval came, trying to slip a Catholic soul into a Polynesian body with the shoe-horn of fanaticism. Now a few natives, most of them aliens to the group, wander dumbly about these formerly busy and happy shores. Two Manga Revan families of the old stock are the lone survivors of a civilization numbering nine thousand souls the day the priest arrived. And all their altars destroyed! To what purpose? To build churches, most of them empty for years because there are no natives left alive to attend them. Where the conch-shells used to blow on the *maraës* before the sacrifices and the dances for the gods, now the centipede scurries."

Much more Tom said, of which I give the gist, since I left the words behind me on that sunlit hill.

"Down below us there to the left is Laval's monument, the cathedral; truly his monument as he lies with his colleague in a crypt directly in front of the high altar. It was on this altar that the great pearl which Maputeoa gave to Lavel once gleamed. It weighed fifty carats and was as blue as the skies so Utato said one day when he was very drunk. No native will ever speak of that great blue pearl which once rested on the high altar, nor ever will they tell you about the magnificent necklace of black pearls which adorned the madonna to the right of the altar. When Laval was ordered by the French governor to Tahiti he had these superb pearls all sent to Rome, where they now form a not inconsiderable part of the rare jewels in the treasury of the Vatican. It is said the blue pearl is the finest pearl in the Pope's collection."

Here Tom looked cautiously around him, though there wasn't the slightest indication of any one within sight, and the natives would not have understood what we were talking about even if they had chanced to hear us. I had noticed the same lowering of voices, the same cautious shifting of attention to take in any possibility of eavesdropping, when Nordhoff and Hall told me their story in Papeete. The episode of the Maga Revan princess and her midnight visit to the schooner in Rikitea Harbor came to my mind. I told it or started to tell it,

when Tom interrupted me.

"Yes, Bob. And stranger yet is the matter of Gregory's strong-box. When Maputeoa died Marie-Eutokia, the queen, became regent because Gregory-who was named by Laval-was too young to rule. He fell heir, however, to the collection of pearls that had been his father's. These were kept in an iron-bound box. Gregory died, some said by poison, and the pearls disappeared. I dare not tell you even here the belief among the natives, nor on whom suspicion fell. No, it was not the church this time. The man is still living in Papeete. Nobody knows for sure, and it is best to forget that matter."

Far away on the horizon Tom's gaze rested. The peacock's tail became more brilliant, deep violet blues strengthened the turquoise and cerulean. Little white caps far away near the island of Akamaru cut the surface. Tom turned back to me.

They say a whaling boat first carried the story of these islands to Chile, to Valparaiso. There in a monastery of the Jesuit order of Picpus lived a priest by the name of Laval. Undoubtedly the gossip of the bodegas, the inns on the harbor's edge, quickly circulated to the monastery, as the eye of the church was then very powerful, and nothing was too small or trivial for her attention. So the story in due time reached Laval, who probably sought out the sailors and questioned them as to their story.

They told him of a cannibal king and of his islands and where they lay, and of marvelous pearls which the people valued very lightly, exchanging them for such trinkets as the sailors cared to give them.

They told of the great god Tu, chief of all the gods of the archipelago, who was worshiped with strange rites on his altar, the principal *maraë* of the islands, situated on a sum mit above the chief city of the islands, which was called then as now Rikitea. They told of terrible cannibal rites that were indulged in by these beautiful pale-skinned people. They even whispered that so much did these savages love human flesh that only those corpses which were buried deep in the lagoon escaped their awful hunger.

Laval, already middle-aged, with a mind in which seethed all the love of power, occult and temporal, so peculiar to the Jesuit order, was however a person of no small caliber. Courage he possessed, the courage of fanaticism, but nevertheless courage. Also he was eaten with ambition, and ambition to do some one thing that would add luster not only to the church that he served but to his own name as well. To be a saint perhaps, canonized by the church for some great mission. Who knows? Ambition and fanaticism are explosives which never leave things as they find them.

He suddenly told his brethren that he had received a vision, and laid before them his plan for saving these idolatrous cannibals. Athanael in the desert had a dream of Thais the voluptuary in the theater of Alexander, and was fired with zeal to bring this daughter of "Pan the Terrible" to the cool impersonal arms of the church. Laval in the gardens of the monastery in Chile with his impassioned speeches fired the brethren with his plan, not unlike that

hero of the old story by the nun, Roswitha, which Anatole France has so charmingly retold, and perverted. One of the brethren, led by the magnetism of Laval's personality, stepped out and offered to accompany him on this pilgrimage to the unheeding cannibals of the For gotten Islands-to save souls for the church, to gain some of this pagan wealth in pearls, blue, black and milky white, for the coffers of the church, and perhaps to do more. Who knows?

Laval and his colleague set sail on the first schooner or whaler, whose-name has been forgotten, that was to touch at the Gambier.

In the latter part of 1834 the ship bearing the two priests slowly sailed through the pass into the Gambier. A watchman high on the hill that separates Rikitea and Rouriki sounded his conch-shell the moment the sail was seen on the horizon, and soon in all the valleys and hills of the islands the melancholy and ominous sound of the conch shell was echoing and reechoing.

As the boat turned the base of Mount Duff, there before them lay the ancient capital of the Manga Revan kings. Thirty-five cannibal kings had ruled from this little city, and the last to rule it-had he but known it-was watching the messengers of his approaching downfall.

But before they reached Rikitea boats came out from Akena, and in one of them the king of this smaller island; for each island had its own ruler, though Maputeoa was over them all. When this king was received on board he urged the priest to visit him first on his island. Laval, realizing that it might antagonize a potential friend to refuse him this request, whispered to his colleague to accept. So the second priest went to Akena and Laval was left alone to face the Manga Revan king and his court. As they slowly turned to anchor, boats from the shore glided out to meet them.

While the one priest was being rowed by the light skinned broad-shouldered oarsmen of the king of Akena toward that island, Laval was being made the object of scrutiny by the curious and puzzled natives. A prophecy had said that two great magicians were to come to them whose god was so great that his lips touched the highest heavens and the lowest depths of the sea. Perhaps it was some prescience in the psychic by the natives that connected Laval's arrival with this ancient prophecy, which was credited to Mateoa, the grandfather of Maputeoa, who was fated through his archeological studies and prophecies to go down to history as the Nabonidus of the Manga Revan dynasty. Certain it is that this belief was of great assistance to Laval in gaining a foothold.

He himself knew nothing of this, but probably took all the credit for the interest in his arrival to himself. Minds fired by a purpose or mission believe the very elements are there to serve them, and act accordingly.

Laval on landing first knelt and offered up prayers for the success of his mission. His cross, which he held aloft, was regarded by the superstitious natives as a symbol of big magic. Maputeoa, the king, received Laval surrounded by his warriors, magnificent examples of Polynesian manhood.

Their hair fell to their shoulders, giving them to Western eyes, in spite of their great muscular development, a slightly effeminate appearance. Their loin cloths of tapa were their only adornment, except the tattooed designs that denoted their rank and powers in war. Spears with curved blades, shaped not unlike a young banana leaf and carved from a very hard wood, were the arms of the royal body-guard. Maputeoa himself, who was nearly white, was tattooed on his head, breast and arms with all the hieratic insignia of his rank as high king of all the Gambier. His necklaces of shark's teeth, his especial pride, hung about his neck and covered his broad chest. From his ears hung earrings made from human hair-from the hair of a rebellious chief who had been served up one victorious night at a banquet to the generals who had captured him. Maputeoa's long, beautiful, firm fingers were covered with rings (*tipua*-braided hair) made from the hair of this same chief.

His queen, a beautiful girl of eighteen, dark-skinned, with dusky roses blooming through her amber skin, was all excitement to see this somber medicine-man who had come from the mysterious outer world. Dressed in a skirt of the finest *tapa*, adorned with wreaths of red and yellow *ura* (red-feathered duck) feathers, which was attached to her supple waist by a woven belt of the *ura* feathers, she was beautiful to behold. Around her neck an elaborately woven necklace of hibiscus and *tiare tahiti* bloomed against her dusky skin. In her right hand she carried a pandanus fan, a sign of rank. Only the king, the high priest and the queen carried fans, marking them as persons of the highest caste on the island.

Maputeoa welcomed the priest with all the subtle graciousness of a Polynesian, the most marvelous host in the world. Only the high priest, Iakopo, stood aloof, stiffly and haughtily acknowledging Laval's gesture of greeting with a slight movement of his head, which was adorned with a great head-dress made from the tails of the *ura*. Heavy black pearls hung from his ears, and on his breast gleamed a black pearl of such size and color that Laval found himself staring, against his will. Inwardly he resolved that the church should be the guardians of such wealth as he glimpsed on the austere form of Iakopo, high priest of *Te Keika à Rikitea* and hieratic head of all the *maraës* of the Gambier, uncle to Maputeoa, a prince of the blood and secondary to none in the kingdom, Maputeoa not excepted.

Against this brilliant throng of beautiful-bodied Manga Revans, gaily decorated with flowers, Laval must have appeared as a sinister note, a black bird of prey fraternizing with a flock of careless and indifferent birds of paradise, firm in their belief that their rights were secure from intrusion, protected by their numbers and their isolation from all invasion.

Laval, installed in a native house built of split bamboo with a roof of pandanus, began to layout his plan of campaign. That he must win over Maputeoa, the absolute monarch of the islands, was a foregone conclusion. Already he recognized the driving power that the warrior king possessed, in addition to his simple frank directness which, if once dominated, could be

used to further any plans conceived by a superior mind such as his own. He thought this could be accomplished. But he looked for trouble from the high priest, and rightly. Iakopo, gifted with occult penetration, was probably the only one of all the natives who foresaw what might be the end of the struggle. between these two civilizations. Laval knew that Iakopo would use every power against him, and that any trouble he might have with Maputeoa would radiate from Iakopo.

And the high priest possessed almost as much power as the king, with one exception. He did not have the power of life and death over the natives which belonged to Maputeoa as king.

The warriors also were none too favorable to Laval. Subconsciously they resented his sex. Not knowing that priests abstained from women they collectively felt a rival. The women on the contrary were one and all curious about the somber austere *popau*. What was he like without all the black tapa? that and other more intimate questions sped from the full curved lips of one fair sister of the island to the other. And the women in the last analysis always have controlled the men in Polynesia, even in the cannibal islands of the Gambier. This the priest did not yet know, but later was to discover at the most crucial moment of his for a time precarious foothold on Manga Reva.

Laval at this time was a slim ascetic, and quite unlike the one photograph which is left of him, taken in Papeete at the time of the Pinchon trial and during his last exile from the islands which for so long he only remembered. This photograph shows him seated, grasping an old umbrella. He is a little too fat and his black-clad body supports a round face in which are delineated all the reasons for his stupendous achievement. His mouth and jaw, even in the old faded photograph, are adamant, as hard as his ambition. But it is on the eyes that one's attention settles. Though they are masked somewhat by a glance of professional benevolence, a strange gleam animates these gateways of the soul.

To every woman, young and old alike, on the islands Laval was a potential lover, and therefore to be cherished. Another powerful factor in his favor was his color. The white man has been and, in spite of all the cruel things he has done to the Polynesians, still remains for them a superior being. But white men also are susceptible to Polynesian charms. Had not all the sailors from whaling and cargo boats alike found the women of Manga Reva desirable, and why not Père Laval?

True the Protestant missionary boat, the *Duff*, had passed by the islands and, with the exception of the sailors, showed no appreciation of their beauty in satisfactory terms. They had not been popular there. The Protestant missionaries had sensed that their fields were better farther off, and they had gone, first claiming the island for England and naming Mount Duff after their commander.

France had then in exchange for certain concessions which she made to England taken over the Gambier among-other islands. And to France the

islands nominally belonged when Laval first heard of them. However, forgotten by the Chamber of Deputies during all the turmoil that surrounded Louis Philippe and his temporary court, the islands had gone serenely on their own and ancient way until Laval landed.

All this Tom told me in-his easy Missouri accent, puffing on innumerable cigarettes the while. Night was now hovering over the reef. The color had slowly faded from the lagoon and to the drama of the story had been added the fluid changes of light on the water, a natural clavilux organ, with sound combined. As the cerulean changed to cobalt and the cobalt to violet, the tone of the wind changed. Far away the cocoa-palms rustled and the sound was like a mighty waterfall. The approaching night and the mists from the sea made, with the rising winds, a sudden change in the air. It grew cold. The last reflection of the sun disappeared from the clouds slowly floating high above Maputeoa's tower. Somewhere in the mango thickets around the point a goat cried. Goats dislike the cold.

"Let's go, Bob," said Tom.

Leisurely we rambled toward home. A curious sort of spell was over me. The sound of splashing water came from the rear of the thatched houses, where our neighbors were all riotously indulging in the evening bath. Cries of "*Haëre maï ta maha!* (Come and eat!)" greeted us as we passed down the road. That courteous gesture is a kindly way of acknowledging a friend in passing and is not to be taken seriously. High over our heads towered the twin towers of Laval's great cathedral. Near by the walled garden of the priest presented a tangled picture of tropical carelessness. The afterglow left barely enough light to see the ruined houses, roofless and filled with trees which fantastically occupied these habitations built for men.

When leaving me Tom said: "Another day we will walk up to the ruined convent and I'll finish the story."

But many things intervened and it was perhaps a week later, one Sunday morning while all the natives were preparing for church, that we found the occasion. The first bells had sounded for ten-o'clock mass when Tom appeared.

"Ready for more Laval?"

"You bet!"

A plaintive goat cry wandered from the jungle as we climbed the red mountain, now past the ruined palaces and towers of Maputeoa which lay below the great stone staircase that leads from the king's grounds up to the cathedral. Farther on we passed the tiny reservoir started some fifty years before and just now being completed by the administrator, Doctor Dezoteur. On and up we went until we came to the summer palace of the king. It is now roofless like the rest and harbors in its spacious interior a rickety shack made from palm fronds, a Reao fisherman's shack Tom said. Twin white and yellow mottled cats lazily curved to my caresses, then resumed their sphinx like siesta.

The cathedral towers and red roofs, the old stone ruins of the palaces, were dearly defined against the lurid green, tropical foliage and because of their size were easily to be distinguished, though the smaller shacks of palm fronds, *ni'au*, and the wooden *fares* were almost lost, from the height where we were standing, amid the trees.

Down in the lagoon at the foot of the king's grounds a large square stone wall was etched on the smooth surface of the water. "That," said Tom, "is the place where the king's share of the pearl catch was preserved in the old days. He was given all the shells found during the first week of the diving season Maputeoa, I mean. His predecessors counted the pearls of little value. But Maputeoa soon learned from the priest that there was value in the 'absurd clam.'

"Now the road wound around the base of the mountain. High above us the mountain, that vacant throne, was hid den by mists floating in from the sea. We passed through thick jungles of mangoes and tangled masses of orange trees dripping with fruit. Coffee ripened on bushes. The overripe beans spattered the ground below them with pomegranate-colored splashes. The parasitic vanilla climbed and clung to the coffee trees, covered with long beans and flowers at the same time. The flowers, belonging to the orchid family and white in color, gave an extravagant note of luxury to the grossness of florid and in temperate nature.

Half buried in this riotous thicket Torn found what he was looking for, an ancient wall. Its slippery blocks of moss-covered coral were inaccessible, and all doors to the interior had been filled with stones. We found, however, a dead tree leaning against the wall and climbed over it and dropped into the garden. The interior baffles description. A tropic conflagration of every sort of tree and shrub peculiar to tropic and temperate zones alike. So crowded were they that none save the largest had a chance of spreading themselves for growth. Peach and cherry blossoms feebly struggled through the choking growth. The coffee became attenuated, long and spindly.

In the midst of this was a great roofless building, bursting with breadfruit, orange and pandanus trees. It was shadowed now by towering *mape* trees, a kind of chestnut one would judge by its fruit, though there the resemblance stops. Its trunks rise like twisted bales of silks in the most exaggerated crenatures to a great height before the foliage begins. The trees so overflowed the building that only a portion of the pointed wall at the far end, rising higher than the rest, gave us any idea of the size of the structure. Trees looked out of the windows, or their dead branches stretched like gray skeleton arms coward the sky.

"This was the convent," said Tom.

Deathlike stillness hovered over this awful thicket, interrupted only occasionally by the thud of a falling cocoa nut or the watery ripple of torn banana leaves. After each interruption the stillness was more deafening than before.

"Let's have a cigarette and I'll finish the story." So saying Tom broke his cigarette in half, as we were running low, and lighted the stub. But the spell of the place was on him, and he did not at once go back to Laval. Instead he shifted on the bit of broken grass-covered wall where we were sitting and looked about him.

"This," he said slowly, "was a convent of Polynesian nuns. Think for an instant of what that means. Passionate, beautiful, primitive girls and women, incapable of understanding what the incarceration was all about! And what walls can stand against a rope let down, or a door secretly opened? They say, in the village they say, that the convent was a hotbed of orgies, that the convents of the Middle Ages of Europe were nothing to this one. But perhaps this was not in Laval's day; perhaps it was later. I could not say. You saw that sort of crypt below the floor? It is told that in that crypt those unfortunate sisters who had given birth to a child, and seemed likely to give trouble about it, were put, and that the waters of the cistern were then turned into it...."

He made a hurt impatient movement with his shoulders, and after a bit went on with the story of the priest and the growth of his mad ambition.

While Laval was laying his plans to conquer Maputeoa and the high priest, matters were faring rather curiously with his friend. At first all had gone well. His reception had been even more favorable than Laval's had been. There was no high priest of such caliber as Iakopo to contend with, no prince of the blood whose occult suspicions sensed the real purpose of his visit.

But the king's oldest daughter and two of her closest friends had conceived a mad passion for the priest. Far better-looking than Laval, legend tells that this young anchorite had come of an old and aristocratic French family. He had studied both at the Sorbonne and at the Beaux Arts, and was an architect of no small ability. What tragedy had occurred to cause him to leave his own country and to enter holy orders, if there had been a tragedy, no one knew, and the young priest had never told his story to any one unless it might have been Laval. Perhaps he had welcomed the journey for its promise of further isolation from his own kind as well as for its offer of service. He seems at all events to have been far gentler than Laval.

The three damsels, so the story goes, were very beautiful, and anyone who has ever seen a young Polynesian girl will understand that temptation had come to the young priest. The king saw no indiscretion in his daughter's shy confession. On the other hand he was delighted with it, and in a courtly speech-which the young man, knowing no Manga Revan, could not understand of course, welcomed him to his family and saluted him as an intimate by kissing him on both cheeks. The purport of friendliness was plain however, and when the priest was shown to the finest house in the village, he was delighted A feast followed his installation, with the usual accompaniment of dancing both by the men and the women.

At the conclusion of the banquet every one withdrew from the priest's house except the three girls. When the door was shut and the music had died

away the young man realized that all was not as the monastery rules had ordered. The girls caressed him and hung their garlands about his neck, then stepped back, waiting for him to make a choice. When he made no move the king's daughter went to him and throwing her arms about his stiffened and horrified form resoundingly kissed him. Then and then only did the priest realize fully what was expected of him.

It is too much to expect of flesh and blood that he did not tremble at the temptation before him. Warm and passionate the young daughter of the king beguiled him with her soft liquid brown eyes and her seductive body. Perhaps he felt horrified that he was sensing her beauty too keenly. What would Laval say? What about his oath? Horror-stricken, he slipped from her soft yet firm embrace and turning, pushed her violently away from him. She fell on her knees and wept.

We know of this intimate scene because outside the *fare*, peering through the bamboo slits, were gathered the king and all the family connections, waiting with simple curiosity to watch the white medicine-man's love feast. Naturally they were totally unprepared for the outcome.

When the king's daughter and her seductive sisters had again been repulsed, this time with frantic gestures on the part of the young priest, and when he began to call down curses in Latin on their sinful and lustful bodies, curses of which the import, if not the words, were plain to the watchers, the king decided it was time for action. The conch-shells of his attendants sounded, and the spearmen came running from all directions.

The priest in the meantime had fled through the back door of the house toward the mountain, and was soon lost to view in the tall *aeho* grass which grows ten to fifteen feet high on all the mountain slopes of the Gambier. The spearmen, running hither and thither with the usual South Sea lack of coherence, could not locate him. Suddenly the king had an idea. He imperiously ordered the grass to be fired. In a few moments the lower slopes of the mountain were ablaze as the grass was very dry, and the smoke mounted ahead of the blaze. The priest had by this time reached the other side and ran down as fast as he could, following goat tracks which led to the sea, his only recourse being as he thought to get across the lagoon and climb the other peak on the twin island. When he reached the beach, however, he saw to his extreme surprise that a cave or tunnel connected the beaches on either side of the lagoon. This exists to this day.

Entering this he found not only shelter but a native with a canoe who had heard nothing of the affair on the other side of the mountain. With frantic gestures the young priest managed to indicate that he wished to embark for Manga Reva at once. And stripping off a ring he offered it to the native, who delightedly slipped it on his own finger, and taking up his paddle soon was beyond the tunnel and well on his way to Manga Reva. They were never noticed, as the fire was burning brightly all over the hills and mountainside of Akena. In an hour the young priest was landed at one of the wharves of

Rikitea and taken at once to Laval's house. Maputeoa took both the priests under his protection after Laval had explained the situation as well as he could in sign language.

Laval began now to acquire the vocabulary of the language. Pointing to an object he would get the native name for it, and as the weeks passed he became able to carry on a halting bur fair! y satisfactory conversation. Language was his first necessity. The Manga Revan dialect is exceedingly difficult, as it is really the ancient Polynesian language in all its purity. The old Tahitian tongue-long since disappeared-resembled it, as do the language of the Cook Archipelago and the ancient tongue of the Paumotus. Modern Tahitian is comparatively easy to learn, but Manga Revan is as precise as the ancient Greek and now, alas, nearly obsolete.

Maputeoa became more and more disturbed over his guests. They insisted on talking to him most of the time about their God and his *vahine*. One day he asked them if they would perform some miracle for him. Laval had said his God could walk on water. "You do the same!" said the king, and was perforce off to the lagoon to see the strange wonder. But Laval explained that this was big magic, only used for very special occasions, and that anyway it was sacrilege for him, a mere missionary, to attempt what his God did so easily. But Maputeoa was unconvinced. The native mind demands entertainment, no matter how sketchy, and he was tired of their songs. At first he had rather enjoyed the younger priest's tenor voice singing the hymns of that mysterious far-away white God.

Then the prayers out of the little book! They never stopped praying when they were near him and tried to teach him one of the prayers. The words stuck in Maputeoa's throat though, when he had gone to his house and had tried to show off his newly acquired accomplishments before the family. They all laughed except the high priest, who had by now become thoroughly tired of the meddle some white men, especially the older one. Laval was always prowling near the *maraë*, and Iakopo had given orders to the spearmen who guarded the holy of holies on the great *maraë* of Rikitea to spear either or both of them if they ever touched their gods. This he could do, as in his own territory he was supreme.

Finally Iakopo conceived a plan. It was about time he thought to eat these irritating strangers. He would ask Maputeoa to invite them to the law court which was to be held at Tara-Vai and there, when the opportunity arose, have them speared.

On the island of Tara-Vai were two great banyan trees of great antiquity. Here it was that Tupa, during the reign of Tavere mé Taroi, twelfth king of Manga Reva, the legendary figure who first brought the breadfruit to Manga Reva, and the worship of gods which had been followed by the thirty-five Manga Revan kings before Maputeoa, found the natives worshiping great rough-hewn stones which symbolized the elemental nature forces. The stones are still there, and the great banyan trees stand to this day. Never has a single

twig or branch been cut from them, as they are still considered sacred. Even in these latter days great decayed trunks, curved like elephant heads, demons and devils, writhe high in the air, horrors frozen into wood.

So the high priest laid his plans with Maputeoa. The king issued a request, rather than a command, that the two white priests were to accompany him and his court to Tara-Vai where he was to hold court for the local disputes over land and boundaries, always a troublesome problem in the South Seas. According to the ancient native law every child has a share in the family land, and as time goes on the quartering and requartering of the family terrain may well be imagined. White men take warning. Never buy land from natives or you will have to buy our a hundred and one relatives after you think you have acquired the property.

Accordingly on the day named the party set out in the king's canoes for Tara-Vai. This was the crucial day for Laval, and I suspect that he knew it.

The court convened under the banyan trees. Maputeoa, the high priest, Laval and his colleague, surrounded by the spearmen, formed the main group. Around them in picturesque confusion the petty chiefs and the men, women and children of the island sat or squatted in the grotesque way only a Polynesian can sit. The disputes were heard one after the other. The afternoon dragged, and Iakopo had found no occasion to get rid of his enemies.

Finally Laval himself precipitated the crisis by asking permission of Maputeoa to say a prayer. It was granted. While the two priests were on their knees Iakopo felt that the moment for which he was waiting had arrived. He nodded to Maputeoa, and the king with an abrupt gesture signaled his spearmen to dispose of the kneeling men. As I have said, Laval had courage. Perfectly aware of the danger that threatened them he and his colleague continued their prayers as though undisturbed. The spearmen ran forward and lifted their spears to strike.

But the blow was never to fall, and for an unexpected reason. As the spearmen stood poised for the thrust, suddenly the women sprang to their feet and with a great clamor of shouts and cries threw themselves on the men and prevented the deed. What caused them to do this nobody seems to know exactly. Some twist of the feminine soul had perhaps turned their attraction for the two white men into pity. After all they had been repulsed not be cause of their own lack of charm, but for a principle, a very different matter.

The crisis was over. The priests arose and calmly as though nothing had happened produced a little book. They went around among the natives and began to write in the book the names of all those who had acted or spoken in their favor.

On his throne Maputeoa sat puzzled over the new turn events had taken. The high priest had disappeared, so no advice could be had from him. And indeed from that moment Iakopo ceased to be a factor in Laval's progress.

Finally, curiosity, the controlling weakness of all Polynesians, king or commoner alike, became stronger than pride. Imperiously gesturing,

Maputeoa ordered, "Come over here, I want to see that book!" The priests gave no sign that they had heard the king.

"Come here!" he said again. "I am Maputeoa the king. I can write. I will sign the book. Come here to me."

At these words, so the tale went as an old native had heard it from his father, Laval turned around and squarely facing the king said: "Come to us if you wish to have your name in the book." He turned his back to the king and continued his task.

The king sat for a few moments, then, unable to stand the suspense any longer, he walked over to the priest and signed his name in the book.

From that moment Laval was virtually king of the Gambier. The natives, quick to understand command where they found it, turned naturally to Laval, recognizing in him a strength, a superiority, greater than that of their king. Part of the tradition pertaining to the kings of the Gambier had been that no king's son might inherit the kingdom unless he proved by his bravery and his sagacity in war as well as peace that he was equal to the task. If the prince failed to pass the test the crown passed to the next in blood capable of holding it. So Maputeoa, when he saw that he had lost the respect of his people and had been superseded by a stronger man, gallantly resigned his position, nor did he attempt to regain it.

He would even, I think, have given up the name of king, but Laval did not wish this for several reasons. It scarcely behooved him, as a missionary, to become outwardly the temporal ruler. Moreover Maputeoa even now was too powerful a factor to be ignored. So Laval made him his lieutenant, and Maputeoa became a kind of autocratic overseer for the new government which the priest proceeded to form.

Thus Laval, almost in a single day, from being the potential *pièce de résistance* of a cannibal banquet, became an absolute monarch with the power of life and death over nine thousand souls, and the owner of singly inexhaustible pearl fisheries. It was heady wine. Who knows what thoughts churned in his brain as he realized the vast power that had come to him so suddenly?

It is probable, however, that at this time the *folie de grandeur* which afterward overtook him was not fully developed. Such things come slowly, and the love of power grows on what it feeds. Undoubtedly he saw first a great victory for the church. All these benighted heathen would be converted at a single stroke, and vast wealth would go into the coffers of his order.

That he took no account of the mental status of the natives is all too clear. And that he disregarded thousands of years of heredity, customs and practises utterly foreign to the Western World is apparent to-day in the results of his baroque experiment. In the development of his priestocracy forgive me that I cannot find the proper word he went ahead as though he were dealing with the France of the Middle Ages.

The South Sea natives have always had a psychic penetration which I

think surpasses that of the white race. But this is rather emotional than intellectual, and with it they have a childlike indifference to material success, and to organization of thought other than that which is peculiar to their own ancient customs and blood inheritance.

Natives dislike repeating the pattern of their days. Variety is to them, as to all children, a necessary, an integral part of their life. If bored with existence in the village they all pile into the family canoe and go over to some smaller island where they own land, and stay there fishing and making copra until such time as the spirit directs removal to another spot more congenial to their tastes at the moment. This necessity of variety Laval never recognized.

Only in one thing did he judge them correctly. They would never, in any organized way, resist his will. He could do with them as he pleased. So with characteristic energy he set about his task.

First of all he must crush the monster of paganism represented by the stone gods that so insolently stared at him from their altars. Probably he was already carrying with him the vision of his own great cathedral that should one day rise above the cocoa-palms at its base. But that must come later. For the moment there were these gods. The one he especially hated was the giant Tu, chief of all the gods of the archipelago. Proudly this clumsy stone idol, of great size and flanked by his satellites, rose on the most terrace Te Keika above Rikitea. Tu must come down.

Assuring Maputeoa that the mighty magic he posses would do terrible things to his people if the ancient gods were not destroyed, Laval fought until he had completely dominated the king, who became like clay in the hands of this superior will. It was the dramatic driving force of Laval's personality which won the day. Maputeoa's fear of the wrath of his ancestors and of his gods subsided. He became a Catholic. Then he issued orders that all his people must attend to the priest, who represented a far more powerful God than their own crudely carved *tiis*, who symbolized the forces of nature. He tried, they tell me, to soften the blow by informing his subjects that the new God was doubtless another and a higher manifestation of Tu the all-seeing, who would still be with them. So the simple natives turned unwillingly from their gods of stone, coral and wood, to painted plaster effigies which the priest imported from Chile. Of any more intellectual concept they were incapable.

Having thus at a single stroke changed the uncomprehending populace from joyful pagans to Christians, Laval started on what must have been really an orgy of destruction. Tu was pulled from his lofty porch and cast into a huge bonfire, so hot that it melted part of the stone. The remains of Tu may be seen to this day, an almost unrecognizable lump of volcanic stone. The nine great *maraës* of the archipelago were visited one by one till the work of destruction was done. Only one altar escaped Laval's fury, the little altar of Parquitala, of whose survival I have told in another chapter.

The sight of these ruined *maraës* always rouses in me, as an artist, a fury answering that of the priest who destroyed them, coupled with the great

wistfulness with which man sees something lovely destroyed forever. The old gods of Manga Reva would be to-day, from the archeological and probably also from the artistic point of view, worth their weight in silver.

How much better would it have been if the French Government had not forgotten this harmless terrestrial paradise, and had administered it as it does its other colonies! For it stands to the credit of the French Government that they have never ruthlessly interfered with the religious worship of their colonies.* The really dark and objection able feature of cannibalism could have been handled far more successfully also, as it has been in other islands, by the government than by the church.

*An early *administrateur*, Monsieur Roncière, ordered the destruction of the great *maraë* with ten terraces which was located in the district of Papara in Tahiti. The stones were used to build a bridge, which was promptly destroyed by the river at the time of the following rainy season. A case of mistaken zeal and not of religious interference. This monument was as interesting in its way as are the pyramids in Egypt.

Better yet, and far more profitable, would it have been if the French Government had done as the Dutch Government has done on the little island of Bali. Here missioaries are prohibited by law from interfering with the religious customs of the people. Another law decrees the national costume be worn there. In consequence this, and other similarly enlightened policies, this little island has now about a million inhabitants. Tourists and scientists from all over the world seek our this lovely spot in such numbers that only a certain number of visitors are permitted to leave Java for Bali at a time. Imagine how rare a spot the Gambier would be to-day if her high altars and ancient idols had been preserved, and the lovely old native costumes of the country were still to be seen on her roads!

But to return to Laval. The old gods destroyed, he attacked the more subtle problem of imposing his own ideas of conduct on the natives. He taught them first of the hydra-headed monster Sin, that medieval concept from which the Western World is slowly and painfully emerging. Somerset Maugham, in his *Trembling of a Leaf*, expresses acidly through the mouth of a Protestant missionary what must have been Laval's own idea, "The natives knew nothing of Sin till I came and taught them to avoid it." And so the natives learned that their lovely, firm, satin-skinned bodies were disgraceful and sinful things that must be clothed, the uglier the clothing the better. Pride would then be annihilated. If a boy and girl fell in love with each other they must be legally married. And all this must be accomplished almost overnight, when for thousands of years it had been otherwise. Many of the women and girls he forced against their will to become nuns, and the men monks. But not in five years nor in fifty can a Polynesian comprehend the meaning of all these new

and curious customs of the great white race. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil these simple natives had never touched, and so had escaped since the dawn of time the terrible penalties which their Occidental cousins had brought upon themselves.

In all these changes Laval's method of organization seems to have been very simple, as befitted a simple governmental situation. He early organized a native police force to carry out his orders. Even Laval's defenders and it is inevitable that, belonging as he did to the powerful Roman Catholic Church, he should have had defenders admit that his police force was often rough. I imagine that this is an understatement.

As time passed, with no serious impediment to his will, Laval's ambition began to grow greater. He started, I believe, by building a church of a reasonable size. But very soon he was no longer satisfied with this. The time, he felt, was now ripe for the fulfillment of his dream of a great cathedral. In itself there is nothing unreasonable in this. But when you realize that the one he planned, and executed, is as large as many of the great cathedrals of Europe, and is at least ten times as large as required for any use to which it could be put, you will understand where his ambition was leading him. Telling Maputeoa of his plans and playing upon the childlike credulity of the king, Laval painted with words the beauty of his proposed *fare pûre*, house of prayer. To do this, Laval explained, great blocks of coral must be cut, and lime must be made by burning smaller pieces. Every man, woman and child on the island was necessary to accomplish this great work.

Maputeoa, staggered at the size of the order, demurred at first. But Laval found a ready weapon in the king's childlike vanity. He described to him the palaces of the kings of Europe and told Maputeoa that he also should have such palaces, courts, towers and gardens close beside the cathedral. He would be the only king in Polynesia so magnificently housed. Then Maputeoa, completely under the almost hypnotic spell of Laval's personality, gave in.

Laval ordered that the entire population should begin work at once. The aged and infirm and the smaller children he told off to prepare food for the workers!

Blocks of coral of great size were cut at infinite pains. On the little island of Kamaka especially fine coral for this purpose was found and carried, block by block, in the small boats over to Manga Reva.

There were not enough people for the tremendous job so Maputeoa told Laval of the Island of Timoe, lying some twenty-five miles outside the reef. This island was a coral atoll of some size whose people had been ruled by their own king from time immemorial, paying a slight tribute however to the kings of Manga Reva. Is inhabitants were allowed to visit Manga Reva only for trading purposes, and boats came over two or three times a year. They were not allowed to touch at any spot in the Gambier except the town of Rikitea.

Laval issued orders that these people were all, to the last living being, to

be brought to Manga Reva, ostensibly that they might partake of the blessings of the new white God, really to help in the work of building the cathedral. To us at this distance it seems incredible that a whole population should allow themselves to be sold thus into slavery without even an audible protest. Yet that seems to have occurred.

Having by now turned his mind to building, Laval's craze for destruction seemed to have left him. At least he gave no orders concerning the altars of Timoe. Consequently when the people left, Timoe became in a sense the Pompeii of the Gambier. Only on the little deserted reef-guarded Island of Timoe is it possible to see to-day if one has the great opportunity of going there-the outward symbols of an ancient Polynesian civilization, in the altars and the numberless graves of ancient origin, built of coral blocks tier upon tier above one another. For centuries these have lain undisturbed. Certain natives in Manga Reva to-day are descended from these Timoens, and they tell of a white queen, the White Queen of Timoe, who once ruled their forefathers.

So, with all the resources of the archipelago at his disposal, Laval was soon to have his dream realized. His colleague, the architect who had studied at the Beaux Ans in Paris, had drawn the plans, not without ability. In its completed state it looks rather like an enormously enlarged Santa Barbara Mission. Laval, owing to his descent and sympathies, naturally preferred the Spanish in architecture.

So far all had gone well, but now came the warning bell which sanity would have heeded but which in Laval fell on deaf ears. The people began to die under the forced labor. These gentle and beautiful people, never used to long continuous labor, accustomed for countless centuries to the easy and varied life of the luxuriant semi-tropics, had no physical resistance with which to meet the new demands. Patiently and uncomprehendingly they worked, spurred on by Laval's fury of creation, and the thongs of his policemen. And patiently and uncomprehendingly they began to die.

When Laval saw what was happening, instead of slackening the labor, he was seized by a sort of desperate rage and increased it. Even Maputeoa, blinded as he was, became alarmed and pleaded with him for mercy for his people. But Laval is said to have answered. "Make them work day and night! Only by such righteous labor can they expiate the sins of their lustful ancestors!"

Revolt? The natives had no minds capable of conceiving of such an action. Therein lies the terrible and in eradicable sin on Laval's own soul, greater far than any he may have cured.

Meanwhile some of the workmen toiled on the king's palaces, and soon Maputeoa was housed as no Polynesian king had ever been before. His dining-room stands to this day, a lovely round tower, rather Norman in its general style, approached by an outside staircase. Through the windows a view of the lagoons makes one think inevitably of Keats' immortal lines

"... magic casements, opening on the foam

But, save for the tower, all else is desolation. Scarcely seventy-five years have passed since the death of Maputeoa, and already his fair pleasure towers, his summer and winter palaces, his courts and gardens are impassable because of tangled jungle growth and crumbling fast back into the earth from which they were thrown up by so much blood.

One wonders whether or not the ancient gods of these islands, who symbolized the great, clean, penetrating powers of the universe, turned their backs in disgust on the race they had watched over and nursed for countless centuries. It is certain that the moment Laval's experiment commenced to flower the natives could expect nothing more from these ancient forces they had deserted like dumb beasts.

And what were Maputeoa's thoughts as he lay dying in his palace on that long summer afternoon in 1854? His brief association with Laval and big white magic was scarcely enough to wipe out of his mind and soul the hereditary thoughts and practises of his ancient and kingly race. He had believed in gods, demons and the spirits of his ancestors. He had held the power of. life and death over his own subjects. And he died the channel for Laval's ambition.

Maputeoa was buried with much pomp and state, his gold spoons with him, under the roof of the chapel tomb Laval had built for him. His names, pagan and Christian, dates of birth and death, his virtues and the symbols of his earthly state, a cross, scepter and crown, were all crudely carved in the ancient Manga Revan language on a bit of copper and affixed to the tomb. The chapel still stands, but its roof of red tiles has long since fallen into the hibiscus hedge at the base of the walls.

The cathedral was finished at last. But Laval's mania for building had only been whetted by his accomplishment. He dreamed now of a great city that should rise on this remote island, an eternal testimonial to his name. Wherever an altar had existed there must be erected a church. And it was done. Every one of these smaller churches is as large as the cathedral in Papeete. Splendid chapels, the convent, a monastery, a school, houses for his own use, triumphal arches of great size on certain of the smaller islands, a belvedere - all these came into being. And with them a large number of palatial and unhealthy stone houses for the aristocrats of the place, with walls three feet thick, which were horribly damp in the rainy season and very quickly abandoned by their owners.

So Laval's city rose, a city of coral and stone. But what of the people who should inhabit such a city? What of the souls who should give it life? There were fewer and fewer of them now. More and more of them, still patiently and uncomprehendingly, died every year. The work perforce went more and more slowly. Now too Laval had spread his works out beyond the city, and set out great plantations for the church, plantations now gone back to jungle. But his

will never slackened. He drove savagely ahead to ruin.

Later, there was danger of losing the church lands. France, having passed at home from the control of the church, made a law confiscating all church lands in her colonies, as well as in the homeland. The Bishop of Tahiti, hearing of this, sent word to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Hawaii, which is under the United States, and this dignitary purchased all the lands in the Gambier, officially for his own Hawaiian bishopric, before the law went into effect in French Oceanie.

In addition to his building program, Laval had taken over - always in the name of the puppet king, Maputeoa - the other phases of government. He had evolved a law code, known as the Manga Revan Code. It was in essence the system of laws in force in a Jesuit convent, applied to a Polynesian race. This code it was which finally brought about his downfall as autocrat of The Forgotten Islands. As Laval worded it the laws were to protect the natives from sin and the temptation to sin. One of the laws stated that at the first sight of a vessel on the horizon all women and girls must retire to the convent or the cathedral, remaining until the vessel had left the harbor. Another made adultery, or even attempted adultery, a crime punishable by months of imprisonment. And this in the South Seas!

Naturally the sailors and white traders who touched at the archipelago, being mere human beings and not subjects of Laval, resented these laws and carried to Papeete highly colored stories of Laval's high-handed and autocratic rule.

Moreover they added that he was amassing a vast fortune in pearls, and they spoke of the great blue pearl they had seen on the high altar of the cathedral, which had been a gift from Maputeoa to the church, and of the magnificent string of pearls around the plaster bosom of the Madonna. This is what started the trouble in the highest circles in the French colonial office, this and the complaints of two Frenchmen who were living in Manga Reva. The Forgotten Islands were to be dynamically remembered.

It was in 1858 that the first of a series of incidents occurred which were ultimately to undermine the authority of Laval. Jean Dupuy, who had come to Manga Reva to reside as an agent for his uncle Jean Pignon, refused to sign an agreement to observe the Manga Revan Code, an agreement which Laval exacted of every one on the island. He was at once arrested, according to Laval for an attempt at adultery with a native woman. He was condemned to a fifteen-month sentence in the church prisons. Of this he served two months and was released. He then appealed to the governor of Tahiti, Monsieur de la Richerie, against being obliged to live according to the local laws of the Gambier, he being a French citizen in a French colony. Pignon, his uncle, also complained to the governor that his commerce in shell was being ruined by the actions of the natives at the instigation of Laval.

The Roman Catholic Church, according to its annals published by the *Société des Sacrés-Cœrs de Picpus* in a series of articles by Georges Goyau,

felt that the governor was endeavoring to establish Protestant missionaries and used his power against the Catholic mission. But on the face of it the affair would need no such spur. At any rate an inquiry was made into this Manga Revan incident, now known as the Dupuy-Pignon case. The result was a blow at Laval. Maputeoa having died in 1854, the queen regent, Marie-Eutokia, was officially ruling in the Gambier, though she was if possible even more thoroughly Laval's puppet than Maputeoa had been. The queen was accordingly ordered to pay to Dupuy and Pignon two indemnities of ten thousand and one hundred and fifty thousand francs.

In 1864 the Comte Émile de la Ronçière succeeded Monsieur de la Richerie as governor of Tahiti. One of his first actions was to visit the Gambier with full authority from the French Government. His visit was the end of Laval's authority.

I wish I might have seen this visit of the Comte's. It must have been extraordinarily dramatic. They tell me that first, over Laval's fervid protest, he ordered the prisons thrown open. Two small boys were found in one of the dungeons, and upon being interrogated by the minister, said they were placed there because they had laughed during the mass. The *Annales des Sacrés-Cœurs* says quaintly that the natives had one and all declared to Laval that they preferred to be imprisoned by the priest until it was his pleasure to release them.

The Comte then demanded to see the birth and death records, but Laval was so insistent that he first visit the city that he consented to make a tour of the strange and flamboyant precincts. I can see in my mind's eyes the French official, dry and crisp and more and more amazed, tramping through the buildings and viewing the great useless churches.

Returning at last to Laval's offices he again demanded the records, by right of his imperial commission, granted under Napoleon III. I have never quite understood why Laval had kept these records which testified so strongly against him. Perhaps even his audacity had limits, or perhaps he really thought them of small importance. At all events he now produced them under protest. The Comte looked them over carefully. As the story is told both in Tahiti and in the Gambier he then demanded:

"What sort of government do you call this? Five thousand men and boys dead in ten years, over half the population, from this mad building plan of yours!"

Laval is then said to have made his famous defense.

"True, Monsieur le Comte, they are dead, but they have gone to Heaven the more quickly!"

This statement is the real climax of Laval's dramatic history. What follows is the government's investigation of Laval's traffic in pearls and shell, which can be read in the pages of the French law annals in Tahiti.

Laval departed for Tahiti the fourth of April, 1871, and except for one short visit after this to the kingdom he had ruled, he remained in Tahiti and

died there November 1, 1880.

Four months later, on the twenty-first of February, 1881, the Gambier, which since 1871 had been brought under the protectorate of France by Monsieur Girard, *Commandant des Etablissements Français de l'Oceanie*, were annexed to France, through Monsieur Chessé.

My own admiration for the church which Laval served is too great in any way to implicate the parent organization in Laval's mad experiment, unless it were in defending too ardently an unworthy son. That church which gave Michelangelo the chance to become one of the immortals through the magnificent commissions only her wealth made possible, and fostered Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Angelico and unnumbered artists, architects and musicians who would never have reached their fullest powers had the church not given them the means of expressing their work in the fullest term and in spiritual themes, the most inspiring of all, that church must always find gratitude among the artists.

In my own small way I tried to add to the tradition which the church created, for during my residence in the Gambier I painted and donated to the cathedral a large canvas of Saint Michael, the patron saint of the archipelago.

That some of her missionaries lost sight of the underlying principles of the church in their zeal at proselyting is to be deeply regretted, but this reproach can be brought with justice against any moral crusade, and can not be laid exclusively at the door of the Roman Church. La val's isolation from his brethren and his unlimited power over a very simple people formed a temptation which only the strongest and best balanced of men could have withstood.

The succeeding years have been without dramatic event in the Gambier, unless you call the steady decrease in the population a dramatic event. For the race never recovered from Laval's forced labor. Something in them was broken, and the deaths went on. The white man's diseases added to the decrease. To-day two hundred natives are all that remain of the nine thousand who lived there when Laval arrived.

Serenely life moves on in the Gambier. Resident after resident, as the French governing official is called, comes and goes in the wide-verandaed house by the lagoon. Priest has followed priest as curator of the great crumbling monument left by Laval on Manga Reva.

One priest, however, has remained for forty-two years, Père Feria, and his fineness and understanding of his native parishioners has been one of the most beautiful chapters in Polynesian religious history. A great student, Père Feria has compiled a dictionary of the Manga Revan language, incorporating therein many descriptions of pagan ceremonies left by Iakopo, uncle to Maputeoa, and other valuable data of inestimable worth to a student of Polynesia. Kindly, penetrating in his understanding of his people, he has ever built up what he could with the remnants left to him. He takes always into account the child like nature of his natives. Their shortcomings he knows by

heart, but it is with the heart too that he corrects them.

To see that old bent figure, clad in vestments turned the color of bronze, his big straw hat shading his venerable head from the rays of the sun, is to see a personage. His slender lined face has in it the innocence of a child combined with the sagacity of a statesman. Eyes difficult to describe he has, great earnest gray eyes, ever ready to break out into a twinkle at some humorous incident. His voice always makes me think of faded music on old reed pipes. In his house by the cathedral, bare of every luxury, he listens to the disputes of his people, and lays before the administrator many of their troubles. And never by a hair's breadth has he been known to press a point beyond the French resident's decision, which is law. Kindly and great in his actions, he is a beautiful figure and one that could have graced the highest spiritual offices of the church. But such is his love for his natives and his understanding of their childlike shortcomings that he has never desired to leave his post.

A great figure he seems to me, splendid almost to epic proportions and one in whom the best traditions of the church he has served so well have come to such perfection and mellowness that he is like some old painting by a great master. He is so fine that one wonders at the completeness and fineness of his life and would fain know more about its building. But he never talks about himself, and so all one can do, as before any masterpiece, is to admire and not puzzle too much as to how it was brought about.

And so the story of Laval, the mad priest of Manga Reva, is ended. His great cathedral still stands at the foot of the mountain whose top is like a vacant throne. Père Feria holds mass in his glittering vestments before a handful of natives and a host of whispering ghosts. The sound of the waves on the reef breaks in on the quavering voice as it intones the *benedicite*, and at night the flickering of candles through the open doors is tenderly haunting. Down below the steps of the cathedral lie the roofless pal aces and towers of Maputeoa. Nearer the shore the great triumphal arch opens the way to the cathedral steps, while not far away are the crumbling arches of the monastery. Through the gloom roofless houses seem to be filled with unearthly movement. Out in the lagoon long wharves wait. For whom? On moonlit nights crouching figures seem to linger at the water's edge. Figures seem to move and sway along the dim perspective of the beach. In the jungle's depth a faint ghostly form moves in the moonlight a banana leaf, one's startled senses reassure one.

And so it is on The Forgotten Islands, once the habitation of cannibal kings, and the stage where the mad priest played out his strange story.

Night had come before I, frozen to my grassy seat by the ruined convent in attention to Tom's story, noticed that gradual lessening of the light which betokened her corning. Tom rose stiffly and stretched himself. The night mists seemed to intensify the perfumes in the jungle which had once been a garden.

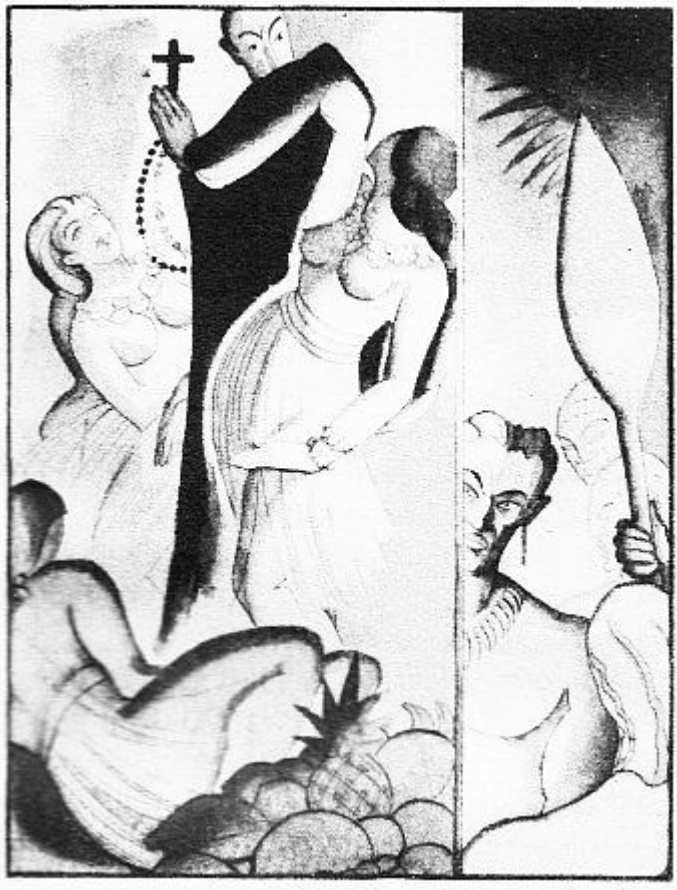
The pungent odor of lemon and orange blossoms mingled with the fainter perfume of a few scraggly peach trees. From some concealed course came heavy death-like smells that made one apprehensive. Curious tales about the convene trailed through our minds as we picked our way out through the dense underbrush. Tom shivered.

"Let's get out of here!" he said testily. 'I've never liked this place. There's something uncanny about it."

Just then, faint and far away, almost like an echo, came the melancholy sound of a conch-shell. It was the first and only time I heard such a shell blown on the islands. Tom started.

"That's another thing," he said, "no one uses these old shells any more. Hurry!" And tearing and crashing our way we were soon on the other side of the wall, breaching easier.

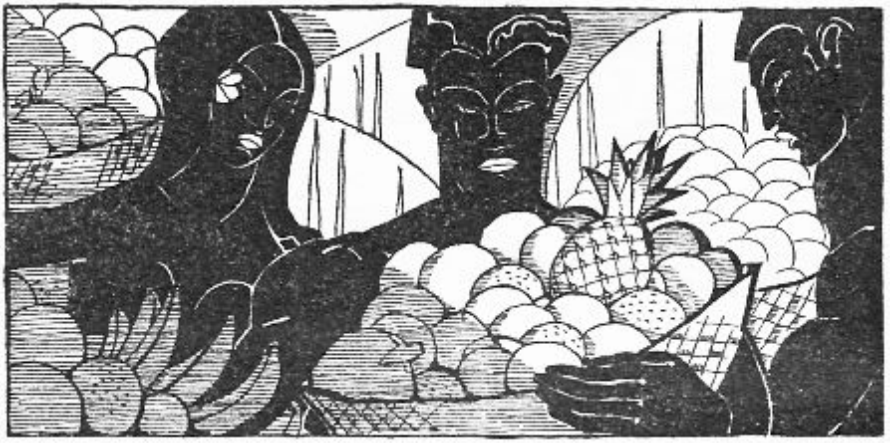
There below us, faintly lighted, the windows of the cathedral gleamed in the dusk. Not far away a stone Saint Francis stood preaching to the trees. The tall cocoa-palms bent gracefully as though to listen and, like the birds of Saint Francis, were all that was left to hear the message.



The king's daughter went to him and throwing her arms about his stiffened and horrified form resoundingly kissed him

The destruction of Tu

CHAPTER V
of GHOSTS and MAGIC



HAT my neighbor in Manga Reva sometimes spoke of me as *fetii te tupapau*, "ghost cousin," is a fair indication of my status with the invisible but undoubtedly ever-present shades of the ancient dead of that cannibal archipelago.

How am I to describe the subtle chemicalization that changes a frank disbeliever in the ghostly world and its protean inhabitants to a state of calm acceptance of the eery plane? The process is perhaps too difficult for description, though the fact remains. Especially is it difficult since a decidedly materialistic, though good-natured air of humorous cynicism prevails in the countries of the Western World. The only exception, to my knowledge, is the fog-swept coast-line of the British Isles called Ireland. This decided little group of free-thinkers have never given up the ghost-in more senses than one-and still battle for their material and spiritual independence, no matter what jovian thunders law and science may produce. The banshee still howls amid the ruins, and fairies play about the cradles of new-born babes, while ancient crones with starry eyes read meanings in the wind's unaccountable actions on the hearth.

All this perhaps is just as well. There are those who see 'em and those who don't, and that's all there is to it. I found that the proportion of moon-washed believers in the other world was approximately the same among the simple natives of the various South Sea Islands that I have as among my friends and acquaintances in Chicago or Paris.

As I was ghost cousin, the invisible world at times during my incredible stay on Manga Reva became a very gible part of my waking and sleeping hours. I was not entirely unprepared for it of course, since I had already spent two seasons on other islands of the South Seas and had come to accept certain things. Yet so strange and unaccountable were various events on Manga Reva that I did not try to deny them, but found myself accepting new phenomena in the spirit that Marco Polo showed in his journey. Marco describes the golden roofs of Shandu with the unmoved interest of an accountant figuring up his assets, while I noted down one after the other things of ghostly import with the disinterested spirit that the true modern has toward any unusual series of emotional or spiritual reactions.

True it is that never was there a more fertile garden for "vague

happenings" than in The Forgotten Islands. Rarely visited, except by pearl-traders or schooners intent on picking up copra in exchange for tobacco and calico prints, all the strange undertones of ghostly significance lie brooding over the mountains and in the contorted jungles at their base. Ready to impregnate any sensitive, impressionable passer-by, the *tupapaus* fitfully sleep in their ghostly gardens, as impalpable as themselves. Surely the dead have trees and flowers, washed by their dim blue sun we call the moon! We who know so little about things may not take from them their world; we only by our disbelief remove ourselves from the gardens of enchantment where so often, amid this age of machines and high powered salesmanship, we might find peace and pleasant release amid the quiet magic of that world perhaps as real as the one we call our own.

Even from the boat I had received very definitely from the ruins of towers, palaces and churches, especially the great cathedral, an impression of haunting unquiet. Deserted houses invariably have an ever-present sense of presences which new houses never possess. Then imagine a group of islands once so thickly populated that their breadfruit plantations extended from the seaside to the mountaintops, now so deserted that one can find scarcely a trace of these plantations, so thickly overgrown with the tall *aeho* grass have the mountainsides become. At the base of the mountains tangled thickets of untended coffee vie with the rank spreading of impenetrable mango thickets and banana and orange groves for possession of the rich and fertile soil. And all these had once been planted in a somewhat orderly fashion. Now the gardens of a "Sleeping Beauty" lie as far as the eye can reach. All this mad disorder of nature and melancholy derangement of once habitable palaces and houses give the Island of Manga Reva, and especially Rikitea its capital, an air of haunting mystery. One is constantly expecting something to happen.

This strangeness is surely not confined to Manga Reva. The Island of Aga-kaouitai is actually sinister, Tara-Vai a mellowed tragedy, Akamaru an island of sunny secrecy, while Akena somehow thrilled me with a sense of hidden faunlike forces lurking in and about the jungles along the coast, in spite of the ruined school and Greek tower built by Laval, which spot in picturesque fashion the eastern coast.

The three little islands, named Makaroa, Kamaka and Manoui, are fairy kingdoms of some unhappy prince or of an exiled princess. Then the countless little *motus* scattered along the reef hold that sudden untenanted feeling I received from each and every island in the group. Some one had just left-but who? The answer came in a series of impressions and adventures which I narrate just as they occurred to me, without change or exaggeration.

My house, which has been sketchily described, was at night-time shared by others of less substantial mold than myself. And as for the gardens, no one save myself ever went into them at night alone.

Even in the daytime, what with the wildness of the foliage and the ruined and gutted porches on one side of the house two rooms only were habitable

and the hidden windows back of high unpruned oleander trees, the place had a slightly unsavory atmosphere.

At one side of the house ran a path from the main road to the beach. Parallel to this and some little distance from the house curved the old war canal. Used in the cannibal days as a canal up which the war canoes glided to a large inland harbor, it has now become a clogged and useless channel. The inland harbor is a taro swamp, and very gay it is with great heart-shaped shiny dark green leaves rising out of the swamp morass. A thin stream flows from the mountain down through the swamp, and so to the end of the canal which near my house empties itself into the lagoon. At high tide the waters from the lagoon run up stream. So one has the impression that the little stream can not make up its mind which way it wants to flow and tries both.

I locked up all the house except the two rooms in which I intended to live. In one I painted and slept, the other was used as a kitchen. They were not connected but were accessible from the same porch. The ancient path led right past this porch to the beach. This was, so the natives told me later, one of the oldest thoroughfares on the island. In cannibal days the war canoes stopped at the end of the path before entering the canal and unloaded, so I was told, such prisoners as had been captured in battle, either dead or alive. The preparations for the feast of which the central dish was euphemistically called "long pig" then took place in what was my back yard.

Once at high tide Tom, who had been browsing on the shell-littered beach, called me out to him. A storm had washed away much of the loose sand and shells that ordinarily were not touched by the tide. Four or five inches below the top of the bank was a thick layer of ashes and the usual remains of a big fire. Several human bones lay mixed with the débris.

Then Tom pointed to a dark brown object that at first glance had the appearance of a large round stone, the color of old ivory. I walked around it, and there, grinning at me, was the skull of a boy or young man of perhaps sixteen years of age, judging from the shape and size of the head and from the teeth.

"Well, he was long pig. That's certain!" said Tom, "and I wonder how he felt about it."

"And still feels about it!" said I, with a faint but un successful effort at being facetious.

'Let's put him in the cook-house, so the boys won't take him," said Tom, practically, and picked him up.

That evening Tom and I sat discussing our beliefs about the other world.

"You know, Bob," said Tom, "you tell me things exist, but how do you know?"

As this was the hundredth time Tom had put the question to me I was growing a little restless, and answered peevishly, "Well, what do you demand

to prove to you that there is another world?'

"Only to see something, actually to see something with my own eyes! I have felt slighted by Parquitala. Here I've been on the island for five years and he doesn't think I'm worth cultivating! He never looked me over."

'If he had, Tom, you would have demanded his visiting card before you would have recognized him as a bona-fide *tupapau*!"

"Perhaps you're right. Perhaps it's in myself, whatever it is that keeps me from seeing them. Yet things have happened to me here, strange things that I can't explain any other way. The first one occurred on my first Christmas Eve on the island. The girl and the family had all gone to midnight mass at the cathedral, and I was lying down on the grass near the end of your path, listening to the quiet movement of the tide. It sounded like music at times. Suddenly about three feet over my head a thing, a black thing about as big as a cat, flew past like a shot. I was so startled I couldn't move, and lay there motionless. Again it passed me, so close I could almost have touched it. Like a cat curled up asleep it seemed, and it moved through the air just as a fish moves through water. It flew upward to the top of the *purau* tree , and vanished. I am absolutely convinced bird. It had no wings."

'Well, if you don't call that 'seeing something,' just what would you call i?" I asked a trifle maliciously, and next moment regretted it. For Tom's face took on such a look of bewilderment and struggle look at him.

"That's just it! That's just the trouble," he burst out, "I seemed to see it. I'm sure I did see it. If it had Been some. thing I recognized I would never doubt it for an instant. But - *could* I have seen such a thing? Didn't my eyes play some kind of trick on me?" He paused for an instant, and then went on more slowly. "You see, Bob, you can believe in these things without being afraid you are-well going cuckoo. But for me, I live herewith the natives, but I'm American after all. And if I give up everything my own people believe, and get to believing all the superstitions they have here, what will happen to me? The fact is, old man, I don't dare believe these things, and yet I can't get away from them!" His distress was so evident; and his dilemma so real, that I found no answer, and coaxed him back to the subject of what he had experienced.

"Two more things occurred. I was walking out to the farm on a bit of open road that winds through the valley before you get to the girl's land, when slowly trotting toward me I saw an enormous black dog. He passed quite close to me, and I saw him as plainly as I see you. And yet I know that *there is no such dog* on the whole island of Manga Reva, or any of the other islands of the Gambier. The natives of course insist that it was *"The Black Dog of Manga Reva,' ure ere ere, te Manga Reva."*

"But what is that?" I interrupted.

"Well," said Tom, "I haven't been able to find out exactly whose ghost he is, though some say he was once a high priest. At all events he is a friendly and good natured *tupapau* who is rather often seen both here and on the island of Maru-tea.

"But to continue with my experiences. One time I had had a fight with Pindini, the girl, and walked over to the farm and put up for the night in the little *ni'au* shack I had built there. In the middle of the night the sound of heavy footsteps approached, and coming close to the shack stopped beside the door. I waited a while. Then the same heavy steps returned the way they had come. I got up and went out. The moon, though low on the horizon, shed light enough to see distinctly everything in the little valley. There are no high trees and you can see for at least a mile in every direction. But not a sign of anybody was there.

"Next night the girl, feeling lonesome, came out with the dog. We made up as we always do, though I always swear the last fight will be the final one. We had gone to sleep, when I was wakened by the same footsteps approaching just as I heard them the night before. I hadn't said a word to her about them, so her reactions were genuinely her own. She raised herself on her elbow as the steps came closer, and her eyes were wide with fear as sh pressed closer to me, whispering, *'Tupapau!'* The dog never moved, but every hair on his back was standing straight in the air and he barely whimpered, so frightened was he. The thing did exactly what it had done the night before. This time I jumped up, Pindini clutching me and begging me not to go, and ran out before the steps started away, when they seemed to come from just outside the shack. But again nobody was in sight anywhere. And the strangest thing was that I heard the steps start again and go heavily away even as I stood staring at emptiness.

"I forgot to mention, though I don't know whether it had any connection with the event or not, that shortly before I heard the footsteps the first time I had dug up some human bones not far back from the shack in a spot I had picked for my onion patch."

So Tom described the few experiences which he could not explain by any other means than the supernatural. However he felt far more than he ever saw, and the thing that puzzled him most was where did this haunted feeling come from, and what created it? Was it suggestion, or was there really some occult explanation? Ever since my arrival on the island and the experience that occurred to me on my first night there, when I sensed the strangeness that lay about me, Tom had turned to me in his perplexity, and had been avidly interested in what would happen next.

That first night I slept on my porch. The house was in such disorder that I preferred the moonlight arid the heady perfume of the masses of oleander and frangipani that flourished riotously in the garden. I later learned that no native will ever sleep in the tropical moonlight, and even more decided about such matters are those white men who have gone native. Tom said he could never do it, as the house was odd enough at night even with the door shut, without asking the ghosts in by leaving it open! However, ghosts and the thought of them were far from my tired body and mind, on that first night spent in The Forgotten Islands in my new home.

My first intimation that all was a sound of voices about meearly in the morning. I sat up, and still the low flow of some unknown language continued. I got up and finally located the voices near the end of the path which terminated at the beach. I walked down the path with the voices all about me talking in a low steady stream. They seemed at times to come from just beside my head, yet look as I would in the silver moonlight I could see no living thing. Puzzled and unable to discover any explanation I finally returned to the porch and slumbered fitfully till the sun rose.

So busy arranging the house and unpacking my supplies was I for days that the shadow of my invisible neighbors did not trouble me again for some time. Marcel had been installed, and the household moved in the leisurely fashion in keeping with the tempo of my neighbors. Rush? Why rush?

Yo, a fifteen-year-old boy, son of my neighbor across the street, had been presented to me by his mother Pépé. Pépé was the school mistress of Akama, an island across the way, and vacation-time was on for her small charges. She was a native with some French blood somewhere in her colorful background. She spoke French beautifully and possessed not only brains but a rare sense of order in her way of living. Although she had several children she had of course-no levity intended on my part!-never been married. Yo's father was one of her former lovers, the village policeman, who lived on one side of me with his legally married spouse, a stubborn but youthful Reao woman not so ugly as the usual run of the breed. So I was already family property. I had adopted Yo, therefore Yo's families adopted me. Pépé had an eye to business as I discovered when months later I broke up housekeeping in preparation for the trip back to Papeete. It was Pépé who garnered the iron cooking pots, frying-pan, kerosene tins, cutlery, razor blades, and all the flotsam and jetsam of a bachelor's easily run establishment.

I had in addition been adopted by one Soniosa, a dog with the chassis of a dachshund and the head and markings of a fox terrier. Soniosa had, when a puppy, been brought to Manga Reva by the captain of the *Tahitien*, a Manga Revan, as a present to his small niece, and having known the white man's ways and food Soniosa had never forgotten them. So she crawled ingratiatingly over my door-step on her belly one day and carefully crept toward me, tail and eyes begging for friendship. It was too much to be resisted. We became fast friends.

So Yo and Soniosa were my companions night and day. Rather, I should say, Soniosa was constant, but Yo wandered far afield-when his mother departed for her school at Akamaru. Yo was a handsome chap with eyes almost slanting at the ends, a typical Tahitian nose and full lips, always curved in a smile, except when his mother caught him philandering with a *vahine* at night. Then he wept and wailed, but to no purpose. Pépé was a mother, even if her amatory history had been somewhat extra legal, and her duties as such were her constant care.

It was perhaps two weeks after I had been installed in the plum-colored

fare that the second visit of the *tupapaus* occurred. It was about five in the afternoon and I had finished my evening tea. The sun had already set be hind a bank of cloud, so that it was fast growing dark. All my neighbors were evidently assembled in their cook houses enjoying the evening *kai kai*, cold breadfruit and fish. for I met no one as I left the garden. Yo and Soniosa had departed their separate ways hours before, and would turn up I knew when they were good and ready to do so.

Walking across the bridge over the canal I passed on down the road in the opposite direction from the cathedral, past the tiny Protestant church that looked like an overgrown child's toy play-house. Even the Protestant preacher, an easy-going sweet-natured fat Tahitian, was at supper with his brood, as the gleam of a lamp shone through the bamboo slats of his cook-house under the deep shadow of the breadfruit trees. Through the strangely patterned trees the lagoon slowly changed color. The orange light died from the tops of the cocoa-palms, then touched the peaks of the twin and distant islands of Akena and Akamaru, where it rested for a second, and vanished.

The fantastic pandanus trees, with their foliage looking like a harvest of tails from green parrots, turned to black silhouettes against the now violet lagoon. Deeper blue became the sky high over the cocoa-palms, and slowly the perfumes of night were diffused throughout the new chilly air. The stone houses, though I knew them to have been long empty, looked darkly tenanted. I walked past a little faster. Gardens of houses long since deserted bloomed extravagantly behind tall hedges, with roses, frangipani and hibiscus. Orange trees loaded with fruit climbed the hill back of me. One lone tree, heavily laden with oranges, clung as it seemed desperately to the top of a great gray rock which somehow caught my attention.

I became dimly conscious at that moment that some one was walking down the shadowed road toward me. Peering as well as I could in the dim light, I made out before it reached me the figure of an elderly Chinese in soft dark clothes. He was baldheaded and very dignified in his carriage. In one hand he held, at an unmistakably Chinese angle, a long pipe, which as he came nearer I saw to be unlighted.

'*Ia ora na oe* (Good evening to you)," I wished him as he came opposite me.

He gave no sign of having heard me, but passed a unseeing as a carved effigy in a procession.

I was puzzled and perhaps a trifle hurt. I had caused much attention on my arrival that I expected more in consequence, and no native on the island but had questions to ask me, especially if he got me away from the others and alone.

So I stood puzzled in the gloom, when slowly, the same way he had come, the aged Chinese passed again. This time I was determin*ed not to be ignored, so as he approached I gave him "Bon soir, Monsieur,"* in French, on a note of insistence.

This time his head slowly turned, then his body, and he quietly advanced toward me, fixing me with the most extraordinary eyes I have ever seen. I can not tell you what they were like, except that they were very dark, very piercing, and yet in some strange way entirely impersonal. They gazed at me as living eyes might gaze from a mask, for his face never varied a hair's breadth, nor did he utter a sound. For a space of time that seemed unbelievably long he stood close to me, holding me almost hypnotized by his look. Then, still with the same expressionless face, he turned and continued on his way, his pipe still held at the same imperturbable angle.

Oddly enough I was not in any way put out by his gaze. On the contrary, I was conscious of a sense of well being, combined a little with the puzzled feeling a fish must have when yanked into a foreign element. Especially I felt curiously young beside this aged figure.

For a moment I stood in a sort of daze. Then I shook myself and turned to look after my strange companion. Although he had had time to take no more than a dozen steps he was gone as completely as though he had been a figure in my imagination. The road was empty, and it seemed to have grown chill very suddenly.

As I returned home the natives, like the village folk in a stage play, were out chatting over the day's happenings. Guitars and mandolins were being strummed, while Tahitian *hymenes*, soft and full-throated, formed an undertone to the conversation. This time I lacked neither regard nor verbal interest. Like the feudal prince I passed, nodding graciously to the assembled villagers. Not until a week or so later did I speak of my reserved friend to Tom. He and I were smoking our cigarettes and passing in re view the affairs of the day when the old Chinese came to my mind.

"Where is the old Chinese who smokes a long pipe? I saw him some days ago," I asked.

"What old Chinese do you mean?" countered Tom. "There is no old Chinese on these islands. There are Ah Soy and Chin who run their miserable stores, and never have even rice to sell as they haven't the money to buy when the schooner comes. But they are not old and neither of them has a long pipe."

"I've seen them both, and it was neither. But I certainly saw this old bird, as plainly as I see you!" I insisted a little hotly.

"No, you didn't, old boy, as there isn't such a person to see!"

We would have argued half the night if Tom hadn't suddenly been struck by some idea. He stopped in the middle of a word, his jaw still open in surprise and his eyes filled with a sudden and wild speculation.

"By God," he said, half to himself, "it couldn't be he!"

"Who are you talking about?" I asked rather peevishly. "I tell you he came right up to me."

"Come over to the house with me right away, and we'll ask the girl's father Utato. He will know whether or not it is the one I think it is. Yes. Wait ...."

By now my feelings were ruffled. First I had been made distinctly

uncomfortable by an odd old gentleman, and now Tom doubted my story. Nevertheless I went.

We seated ourselves on the floor, and all were soon puffing away at my Rosette cigarettes. Utato was a magnificent old native the color of weak coffee, with gray hair, blue eyes with a perpetual half-twinkle in them, and a quizzical smile on his sensitive lips. Very erect he always carried himself, and though some of his pearl dealings might be dubious, his contagious good-humored dignity was so incredibly boyish that one forgave him everything. This gray-haired boy was sixty years of age.

With us also were his wife, Tiare, who looked much like a well-fed Indian squaw, and her daughter, Pindini, Tom's "girl," a younger copy of her mother in every way. Tiare had a firm jaw and a strong nose, exactly like the features so often seen among the American Indians; and may I add that this is extremely rare among the Polynesians. I have noticed this resemblance only on the island of Manga Reva. Tiare's eyes were untroubled. A slight puzzlement was the greatest emotion that any intellectual pressure might register in them. She was as stubborn as six army mules. Pindini had all these charming qualities of mama, and as they both had violent tempers, when they quarreled they could be heard from the mountaintop. However, like all Polynesians they were nearly always verbal.

But then, Pindini had youth, and one forgives youth all sorts of things one condemns in age.

Then there was Nanon, with a marvelous shock of curly black hair-a pocket edition of Utato, his father. Nanon was Yo's age and his closest companion. Then Ti-Ti, a sweet child of fourteen, lovely as a half-opened rose. Every time I looked at Ti-Ti I would catch a shy glance from her brown eyes. Then she would quickly look away, and only when I turned to look at some one else did I know she was looking at me again.

Tom in his slow halting way told in Tahitian my story of the meeting with the old Chinese. Hardly had the last words escaped his lips when an effect, electrical in its suddenness, took place in the room. In the light of the kerosene lamp the eyes of Utato seemed to grow larger and took on the expression of one who has seen something that isn't there. Pindini's smile ceased. She leaned forward, looking at me with all the ancient belief in her ancestors' gods written on her face. Touching her rosary the picturesque but stupid Tiare mumbled to herself.

Suddenly Utato, in an odd jerky voice, cried out:

"Parquitala!'

"Yes," said Tom. "I thought it was he but I wanted to be sure."

By this time the porch was full of natives, coming from I don't know where, and the liquid name Utato had just uttered was repeated from mouth to mouth. A hypnotic influence seemed to possess us all. I found myself reenacting the scene; just how I stood when he passed me, and how he looked at me when he turned. All this I panto mimed to the cries of "*Aue, aue!*"

Then the spell was broken. Every one started to talk at once, about Parquitala and when he had last been seen.

"Remember, Mytea?" said Utato. "We were playing cards one night and suddenly a shadowy form appeared at the door of the hut, smiled at us, and as quietly disappeared. It was the figure of a French gendarme that no one had seen before, nor have any of us seen him since."

My curiosity by now knew no limits. "But who is Parquitala?"

"Don't you know!" came from every throat. Tom finally quieted them, and told me the story of Parquitala.

Before Laval, fired with the mad flames of religious fanaticism, had started his holocaust of idol-breaking, there stood in the lovely Valley of Itítouiti at the foot of Mount Duff an altar dedicated to Parquitala. A small *maraë* it had been, and not listed among the nine great *maraës* of the islands. No one clearly remembered why it was called Parquitala's altar. It was said that in the dim and ancient days of cannibalism a high priest had lived called Parquitala, who tended three grotesque gods on the altar that later was to bear his name. He had been, so old rumor relates, a great soldier, a mighty warrior, as well as a powerful magician. That he must have been a man of powerful personality is certain, as only three names stand out high above the countless others that have passed in The Forgotten Isles, Maputeoa, Laval and Parquitala.

Now when Laval and his men were winding their way down the steep' path that leads to the valley where Parquitala's altar stood, fired with the insane zeal of impending destruction, the high priest of the little *maraë* who had been warned-sorrowfully gathered the three clumsy wide-eyed stone gods into his canoe. He must, of course, before he did this, have prostrated himself before the ancient shades of the gods of his people and begged them to forgive what he was about to do, since he did it only to save the magnificent memory of Parquitala. At all events he steered his canoe to the deepest part of the lagoon and there dropped the gods one by one into the inscrutable cerulean depths. When Laval and his assistants arrived nothing was left to destroy but the terraces of the altar, which in frustrated fury he ripped apart till scarcely a stone was left where the altar had stood.

As time went on and Catholicism replaced the idols of paganism with painted plaster effigies, the simple natives humbly accepted the substitute and immolated themselves on the altar of Laval's mad ambition. But Parquitala, untouched by the occult splendor of the long glittering arm of the church, walked abroad unmolested by the holy water, spells or incantations which were thrown upon his name. Perhaps he embodies the spirit of all the ancient gods and is deathless. At any rate when he chose to appear no power could be raised against him. The years passed, and the silent shadow of Parquitala moved as though Catholicism had never existed.

When I returned to Papeete almost the first question Queen Maraü asked was, "Did you hear any legends of Parquitala?" Then I told her my story, and

her great eyes glowed with a black flame as she said, "Ah! He looked at you! And on those whom he looks, fortune smiles. Had he not looked at you you would have done well to leave the islands." She nodded, and in her glance was a regard for me that had not been there before.

Still with those great hypnotic eyes full on me she slowly said, "And the strange footprints on the sand-have you seen them?"

The garden faded, as did also the queen, and the sounds on the broom road, and I was back in my plum-colored house by the lagoon. The sun was setting over the mountain and I was just cleaning my brushes after a struggle over a canvas with a modern arrangement in which I was trying to express my reactions to Manga Reva.

From the lagoon I heard voices, then, running up the path from the beach, came Hauhine the native schoolmaster of Manga Reva and Utato's brother. Breathless, he stum bled up the steps. "*Haere mai te miti-te hi'i tapua'e ere ere!* (Come to the beach black footprints!)" he gasped. And I, caught in the contagion of his excitement, dropped my brushes and ran with him down the path to the beach, and to the wharf in back of the Protestant church. Below the wharf and moving in and out on the beach all my neighbors were congregated, Tom among them. Everybody seemed intent on something on the sand.

"Bob, come here!" called Tom in a voice vibrant with excitement, and he pointed down at the sand. "Here they are, the famous footprints of the *Tupapau* of the Sea."

Down on my knees I fell, and there before me was a phenomenon so strange that I hesitate to describe it. Yet this is what I saw clearly defined on the white sand. Coming up out of the sea, and turning above the tide line toward the western end of the island, ran a double line of footprints, those of a man and those of a large dog. Their shape was ordinary enough: it was their color that first struck me. For the prints were black, as black as though they had been printed with ink. Moreover, not by a hair's breadth did they go below the surface of the sand.

Scarcely believing my eyes I bent to examine them more closely. It was as though the surface of the sand had been stained by these inexplicable feet, which had form but no substance. Just before me a fine line of dry white sand had been blown by the wind across the heel of one of the prints. It lay as it might have lain on a photograph of a footprint. All about me, as I knelt in the tropical sun light with the smell of the sea in my nostrils, were real footprints of man and beast which went heavily into the yielding sand. But not these. Like a breath the black shadowy prints rested on the surface.

"Some one die to-night!" said Huahine, his lined face filled with fear.

In spite of my American-bred skepticism I seemed to feel a cold wind blow through my hair. "What is it, Tom?" I managed to ask with some show of casualness.

"Don't know," he answered in a troubled voice. 'I've seen them before, and they never lie. Something will hap pen to-night."

Night was fast falling and Tom and I walked slowly back under the great *purau* trees that lined the edge of the garden back of my house. Showers of big yellow flowers were falling from the trees as the trade winds stirred ceaselessly from the sea. We came to the house before we spoke.

Then Tom shrugged his shoulders as though he were trying to throw off something and said, "Well, we shall see in the morning."

Something had been loosened in us and we fell into one of those endless talks which the eery or the super natural seems to inspire in human beings. I don't remember it all of course, but I can give pretty accurately some of the things Tom told me.

"There are two places in the islands where the foot prints have been seen. One of them is near the end of your path, which by the way the natives consider the most haunted place in all Manga Reva. The other is on the beach of Aga-kaouitai, that sinister island where the cannibal kings lie buried. Old Utato has told me that they are buried high on a cliff, but which cliff I could not dis cover. That island is so haunted that none of the natives will ever be caught there after nightfall.

"You know, Bob, the old Manga Revans were such bad cannibals that the corpses of their own dead had to be carried to the lagoon and there buried. If they were buried on land some one always dug them up and ate them. Huahine has the old native map of the five cemeteries of the Gambier which all lie in the lagoons and correspond to the five largest islands. I'll ask him to show it to you.

"When a native died in the old days he was taken up to the *maraë*, and there the corpse was tied to the upright stone which you see at every *maraë.* The high priest first anointed the corpse with cocoanut oil and then, so Utato says, 'mixed medicine' in the following manner. First prayers were said to Tieopolo (the devil). Then the high priest smeared something-we don't know what on the head of the body. And finally the body was tied in an up right position to the stone. There it was left overnight, so that the soul would not be devoured by the great soul-eating demon, one of the two greatest powers of evil known to the Polynesians. The other is called 'He-who-makes-terrible-dreams-to-haunt-sleeping-men,' a long name even in English. In Tahitian it is unpronounceable.

"No relative was allowed at that time to remain near the maraë overnight, quite contrary to the modern custom of 'grave sleeping.' But Utato says that when any one approached the corpse they saw flames shooting out of its eyes, mouth and nostrils. I think that must have been done by smearing phosphorus obtained from decayed fish on the head.

"Now as I read the story, it was this. The high priests did not approve of eating one's relatives, however agree able they undoubtedly were to eating one's enemies. The custom of leaving the corpse at the *maraë* overnight probably already existed, and public opinion was so strong that they dared not abolish it altogether. Therefore they devised the halo of flames, not so much

to protect the spirit of the departed from the soul-eating demons, *oramatua ai-aru*, as to protect his body from his uncles. In the morning the priest took the body and buried it safely in the lagoon. That is, if all went well he did. But sometimes the phos phorus didn't work, in which case, well ...

"The phosphorus trick is an old one of course, and we can understand it. But these footprints now, they are an other matter. There are no priests of the old faith anymore, so nobody would profit by the trickery, if it is one. Moreover, though I have seen them before and thought about them a great deal, I can't see any possible means by which one could stain the sand in the way it is stained without an incredible amount of labor and, more than this, without leaving tell-tale real prints in the sand where the operator himself stood. To-day it is true there are other prints near the mysterious ones, but I have seen them when there was not a print of any sort, or a disturbance of the sand, within a quarter of a mile of them.

"The natives believe firmly that they are made by the *tupapaus* of one of their ancestors, or by a demon-they are never very clear about this difference--who comes up from one of the old under-water cemeteries. And for my part I don't see how we can disprove it."

Thus said Tom, and at least in the matter of the footprints, I couldn't gainsay him.

Next morning as I was having coffee he slid into the room in the quiet way he has.

"Well, Taaroa's boy, the next to the youngest, died last night, and the funeral is to be held to-morrow. I guess the *tupapau* and his dog got what they were after."

The Polynesians reckon time by the moon, and it is on the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth nights of the moon month that the ghosts walk.* The full moon has risen, and its lower rim just touches the horizon at sunset. It is an ideal time for ghosts to walk at will. Of course suggestion plays a great part in our lives, and to a simple South Sea islander the suggestion that on these nights the *tupapau* are abroad is extremely potent.

*Eighteenth night, *Mua-ra'au*; nineteenth night, *Roto-rd'au*; twentieth night, *Fa'ooti-ra'au*. From the Polynesian calendar of Nights of the Moon.

However, with all my philosophy and understanding of scientific

metaphysics, I will say that there is some very powerful force at work, not only on the nights mentioned but on other nights as well, especially on Manga Reva and the near-by islands. The *tupapaus* on The Forgotten Islands seem to possess more freedom than those of Tahiti which rarely walk save on the three nights of the moon on which they are set at liberty from their ghostly fourth dimensional state of confinement.

On the island of Maupiti, one of the Leeward group of the Society Islands where I once lived for several months, I retired on the first night of my arrival on the island in a small bedroom which opened doorless from the main living-room where the family of Pihau Tane, my host, slept. Tired and exhausted from my trip I slept soundly. But at about two in the morning I found myself awakened by some force outside myself. Raising myself on one elbow, I looked about. Sitting in the middle of the door way was a vague figure which slowly took the very tangible form of an old man. He was so old that his eyes had sunk to pin-points and his long upper and lower teeth protruded beyond his gums. One hand was raised in a gesture of command and he looked straight in front of him, as though looking out the window. When I first saw him he was wavering and mist-like, but before long I saw him with absolute distinctness. Where the light came from I do not know. While I watched, wide awake but powerless to move because of the strange effect on me of this curious phenomenon, I saw shapes slowly rising from the floor. They were black shapes, half seal, half cat, with long black bodies that curled around one side of the ancient figure. They were like seals in their movements, but each animal-if that is what they were-had four very short paws, no tail, and in their catlike heads were set enormous eyes.

This continued for some time. There seemed no end to the scream of little black monsters that rose from the floor, caressed the mummy-like figure, and then circled upward and vanished into the ceiling. Although some curious things happened to me before, this was my first real occult experience in the South Seas and a sort of hypnotic terror came over me. I began to repeat a formula for the banishment of demons and the powers of darkness.

I had scarcely started when the seated figure turned its head slowly toward me, and from what I had thought were eyeless sockets shot dark gleams, like fires glowing in a pit.

The head grew large, the shriveled gums and protruding teeth still hideously plain, and the body assumed proportions to match the head. The arm raised in command slowly reached out till the long bony fingers were just within reach of my face ....

I had the feeling that I was being hypnotized, first into a daze and then into a deep sleep, and I sank away, dimly remembering that the demon's head had swelled until it touched the ceiling before I lost consciousness. The black stream of animals had ceased the moment I commenced the formula. As I dropped into sleep I seemed to fall into an ancient state of being, something from thousands of years ago, so that I was terrified at first, happy at last that I

could do so.

From that day I had no trouble with my life in Polynesia. All forces, material and occult, reached out to help me in every way.

When I told the natives some time after this* about my experience I received nothing but belief, and then I was told the story of Pihau's house.

*They said it was one of their most terrible demons, *Ovamaiua niho-roroa* (ghost with long teeth).

Pihau built his house, against the approval of every one on the island, on the site of a ruined *maraë*, which happened to be situated on land which he owned. Now while the natives have accepted the Christianity presented to them by the missionaries, they yet have a deep-rooted fear and respect for the ancient altars of their ancestors, and to build a house on the site of one of them is sacrilege indeed.

According to the natives the high priest of the Tieopolo has a kind of vicarious life if he finds a living person through whom he may express himself. Old Nairou, the Marquesan father of Pihau's wife, was such a person. He saw the *tupapau* every night. In the morning he described the form under which the demon had appeared to him the night before. Sometimes he took the form of an animal; again he was a huge half animal, half human be ing, terrifying to behold; again he appeared as a black and uneasy cat or dog that ended his wanderings by darting from the ground suddenly straight for the sky and disappearing. Sometimes he appeared as a very old man accompanied by black animal-like forms, and again he appeared as a ball of faintly luminous fire.

The natives believed that my seeing him without warning or preparation on that first night of my island visit was a sign that I was accepted by their ancient powers. Their ancient gods were pleased with me for some unknown reason. This of course established an easy atmosphere for my work, for if you have the sympathy of the people with whom you are living you have nothing to fight against. The natives christened me "ghost cousin," an appellation which my neighbors of Manga Reva took over, and which they seem to feel I rightly deserved.

There is no middle ground in sympathy with that half world. One either wanders farther and farther into the intricacies of the fabulous jungles of the old Manga Revan world, or one does not. Nothing rests for a second where it was up to that fractional margin which divides what we call the past and present understanding of time.

That the gray guardians of the other world had listened to Tom's plaintive desire to know more definitely the phantoms that haunted the island and his

brain alike was made evident about a week after the storm and the finding of the skull.

The night before Tom's final acceptance of the unseen had been a peculiar one for me. I slept fitfully, hearing voices and steps of people passing. Mad fancies played hide-and-seek in my mind. The dog slept uneasily, turning and twisting in her sleep, making a new bed for herself in that ancient fashion peculiar to animals, turning around and around before settling down for the night. Finally I got up, unlocked the door and went out on the porch. The wind had blown ragged clouds across the moon. It was chill, and I felt uneasy in the dimness of the half-shrouded night.

Suddenly beside me, close beside me, flashed a gray cat, apparently fast asleep. It lay curled up, suspended in mid air. I jumped. It flew with an abrupt movement beside me, so close that it touched me. I felt it distinctly. Then it dashed around me and circled out into the vagueness of the garden beyond.

All my adjustments, mental and emotional, were so ragged that I had difficulty in finding myself. I reentered the house, locked the door, crept into bed and deliberately slugged myself with my mind into sleep.

Next morning as I was having my coffee Tom wandered over in his leisurely fashion. I cold him what I had seen. All his features lighted up.

"Bob, do you think it will happen again? Could I see it?"

"Heavens, I hope not, old man! This restless flitting about of sleeping cats, without obedience to the laws of gravity, is getting on my nerves."

After supper that night Tom and I were smoking the last of a precious package of cigarettes. The sun had long since disappeared yet enough light remained to shape trees and houses in a half-distinct way. We were standing on the porch, relaxed, talking about a proposed trip to Aga-kaouitai and the burial-place of the old kings. Tom suddenly stiffened and slowly turned his head. I followed his eyes and there in the black velvet depths of the open cook-house we saw a dimly outlined shape like a man, a half-man rather, as the outline stopped at the waist. The figure was a line drawing, such a sight as a child might crudely sketch in white chalk on a blackboard, a child's conception of what a man might be. While we watched-and it seemed an eternity-it came swiftly toward us, faster than a frightened fish in the lagoon. It seemed to be drawn upon the air, the lines not luminous but white, and though I knew that it was coming rapidly toward us I can not tell just how I knew this. It darted around us and disappeared into the garden, as the cat had done the night before.

Speechless and choking with emotion Tom pointed to where it had disappeared. I was the first to come to myself.

"Well, Tom, how about that?"

But Tom couldn't articulate his thoughts clearly for several minutes. Finally all his curiosity, fright and wonder came out in jerky sentences as he asked what it was, why it didn't stay longer and what it meant.

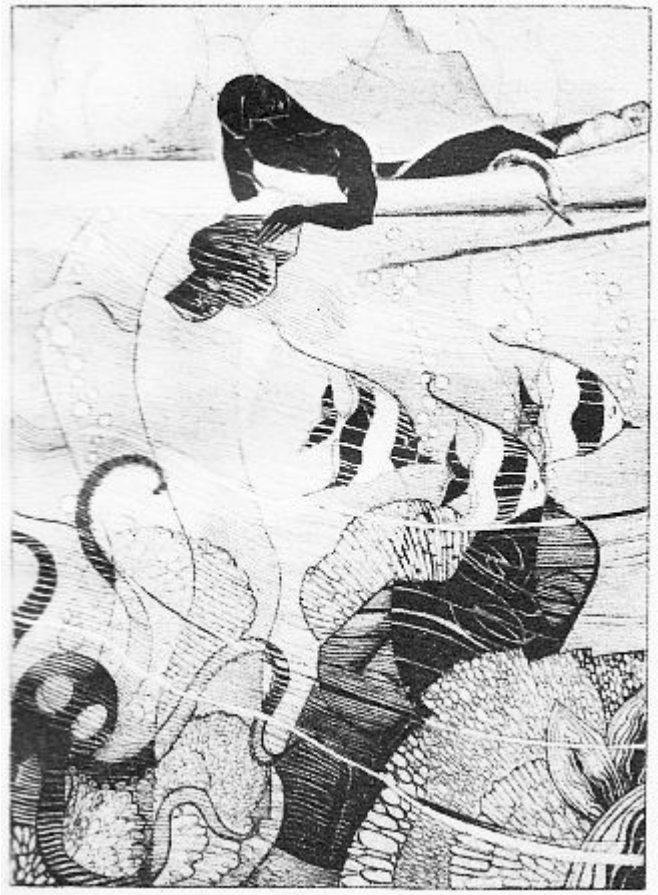
Ignoring these I answered calmly (outwardly I was calm, though I confess

I was inwardly rather shaken): "Well, are you convinced now?"

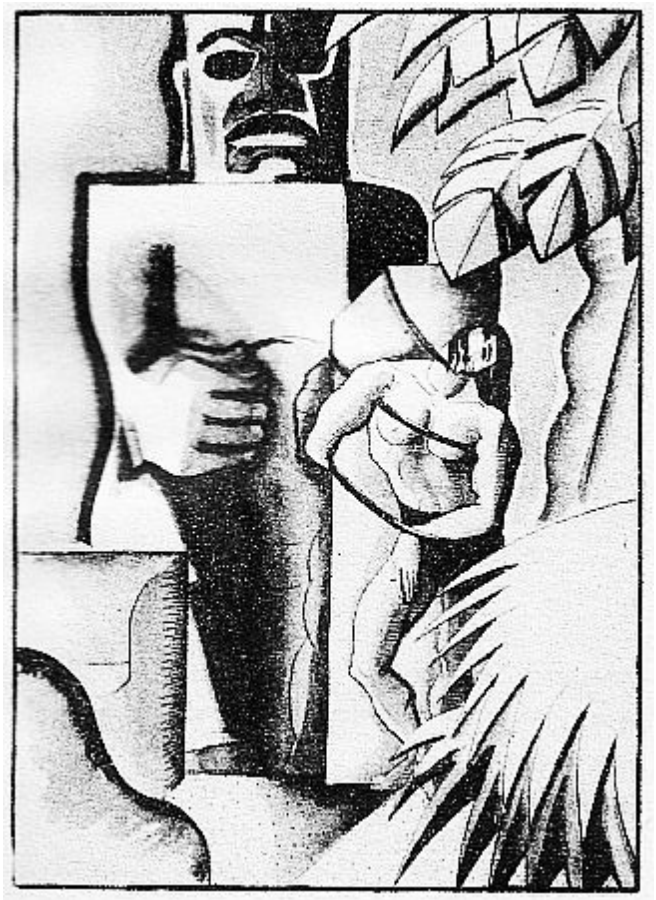
"You bet I am!" he answered with explosive conviction. "But, Bob .."and on and on he wandered, asking me questions impossible to answer.

From that night on Tom lost his puzzled look, but he liked less than ever wandering about in the night, and I always had to turn the flashlight on to the path which led to the road before he would leave my house.

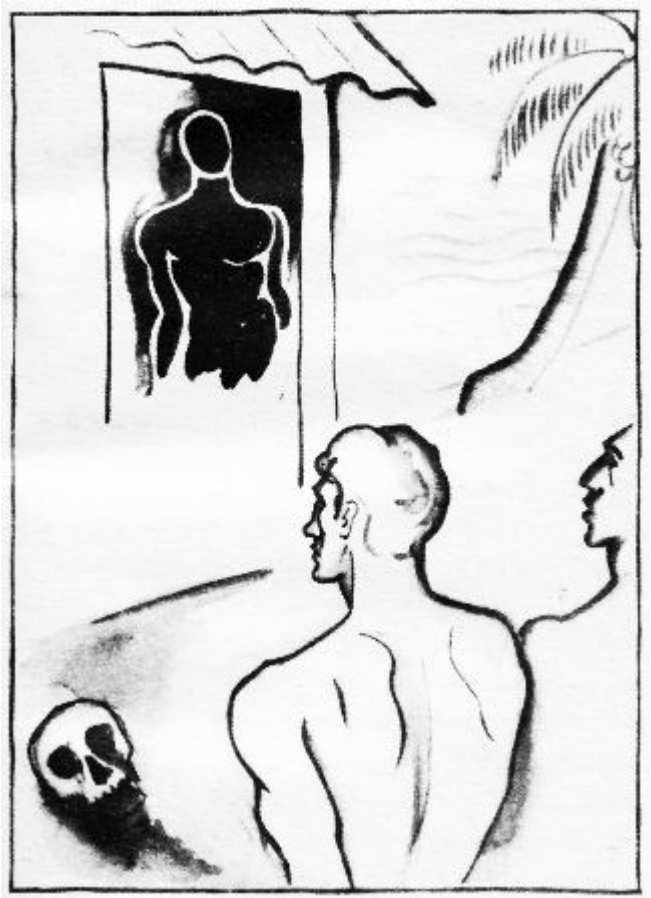
He quietly advanced toward me, fixing me with the most extraordinary eyes I have ever seen



He steered his canoe to the deepest part of the lagoon, and there dropped the gods one by one into the inscrutable cerulean depths

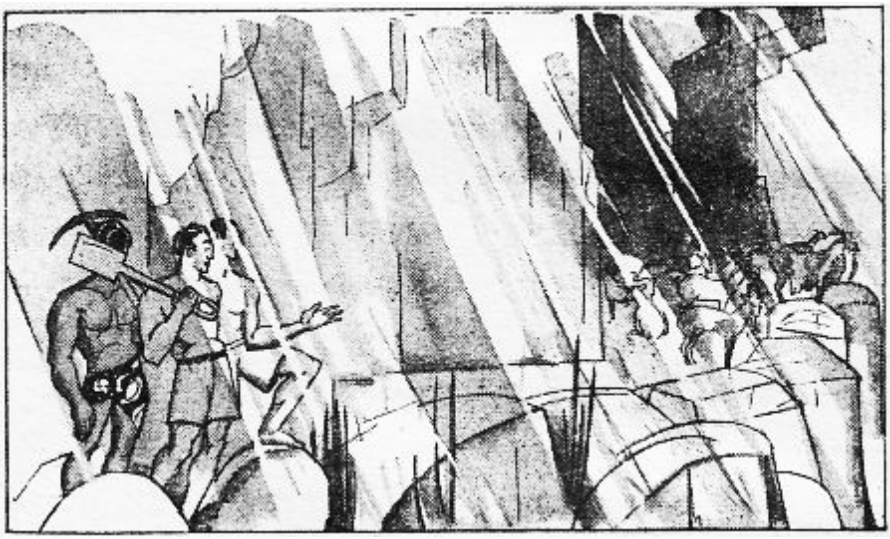


The corpse was tied to the upright stone which you see at every *maraë*



In the black velvet depths of the open cook-house we saw a dimly outlined shape like a man

CHAPTER VI
CANNIBAL KINGS



were the old cannibal kings buried? This question kept circling closer and closer, nagging at me, and as I could not get rid of it in any other way I asked Tom about it.

His heavy eyebrows contracted and he was silent for a moment. Then he said:

"Bob, I don't really know. Though I've been here for five years it just never entered my head to ask. Let us go to Utato. No! I would better go myself, and alone. He will be franker with me if you are not along. They're mighty close about their old kings. Funny too in a way, as they don't hold much to any of their old customs. If Utato doesn't know he will find out from Huahine, his brother, who knows all the secrets of the islands. I wonder," said Tom, "if they ever buried any idols with their kings." And he sat silent a while before he rose from his chair. "I'll be on my way now, and come back and tell you what Utato has to say." In his quiet way he was gone.

The more I thought about the kings the more excited I became. In Tahiti the whereabouts of the burial-place or cave of the old royal line is a secret known only to one member of the family in a generation. I suspect Maraü of possessing that secret to-day, but it is certain that no one else has it. The burial-place of the Salmon clan, from which Maraü is herself descended, is located up a valley in the district of Papara on land which for ages has belonged to the Salmon family. That is not however the cave of the kings of Tahiti, though it is perhaps older as the traditions of the Salmon clan of Papara would put a Hapsburg to shame. For the Polynesian *Almanac de Gotha* traces families through the centuries in unbroken lines that make an Occidental family tree quite a green and modest twig indeed.

Many are the tales about these caves and their quiet occupants. Ina Salmon, a niece of Maraü who looks like Helen of Troy, told me the story of the German archeologist who had wormed the secret a generation ago from a member of her house who held it. He was shown the precipitous cliff the valley of Papara near whose top he could barely the mouth of the cave. Very steep was the ascent, but possible, until, about seventy feet below the cave, the wall became absolutely perpendicular with no chance of a foothold. His native guide, however, pointed out a cocoanut tree directly under the cave. If

he could climb that, since it leaned close to the ledge before the cave and would lean still closer with his weight, he could enter that way. But the native warned him to take nothing away with him from the cavern.

The undaunted archeologist climbed the tree, found all was as his friend of the Salmon clan had described. According to the story which he left behind long lines of mummified kings or chiefs lay in their wrappings of tapa cloth, together with their implements war, carved bowls and other relics of their ancient state. Far back in the cave were many skeletons. In that dusty light it must have been a strange thing to see. The archeologist's professional desire for possession grew too great for him and he decided to break the promise he had given. He chose a beautiful carved bowl, some instruments of war and, sacrilege of all sacrileges, a skull.

When he reached the edge of the cliff with his treasures, however, he looked down and became frightened at the dizzy view. The sight of the palm tree and the valley below him was burned into his brain. A sharp attack of vertigo seized him and only by a strong effort of will was he able to prevent himself from falling. He broke into a cold sweat and was obliged to lie down on the ledge. Presently however he collected himself. The vertigo passed. He slung his treasures over his back with a piece of cord and carefully descended the tree, vowing that if he ever got to earth again he would leave native tombs untouched in the future.

When he reached the ground his guide was horrified at what he had done, and begged him not to take these things, but to bury them at the foot of the cliff.

"Terrible is the curse on all who touch the old chiefs!" he whimpered. "Perhaps you might escape with no harm if you took only the bowl and the spears, but never will the ancient shades of my ancestors forgive your profane hands couching a skull. You can not escape their curse wherever you go!"

But the German took his prizes, and in due time embarked for home. When he reached his native town of Cologne he proudly displayed his relics to his friends, who of course congratulated him, and he made arrangements that his find should be presented to the museum in Berlin after his death. He had long since forgotten the curse.

But one thing disturbed him, a simple thing but unusual for a man of his strong and decided mind and make-up. He had developed a height fear. He could not look out of his windows, which were on an upper story, without seeing a tall cocoa-palm leaning against them and a jungle-shrouded valley below. An attack of vertigo would overcome him and he would have to pull the curtains and get away from the window. He felt as though he were being pulled over the edge. Finally he was obliged to keep the windows heavily curtained. His friends laughed at him and said his Polynesian *tupapaus* were after him.

One morning he was found dead, lying face downward on the pavement below his window. The broken fragments of the old chief's skull lay a short

distance from his body. It is supposed that, terrified by now of seeing the skull and weary of its suggestive power of evil, he had opened the curtains with the intention of throwing it out and so ridding himself of it, and that the attack of vertigo had overcome him again, for the last time.

"That," said Ina, the lovely Helen of Troy of Tahiti, "was the fate of a man who dared to oppose the wishes of an ancient *arii*!

The somber and brooding wonder which one feels when thoughts turn to these rulers, these *arii* or kings of old Polynesia, has in it a bit of fear. Were they so powerful in their understanding of elemental magic that they could project their will across the mist-enshrouded centuries? That the natives believed in and felt such a power was to be expected. The kings had been their kings, their ancestors had been ruled by them and if there were truth in such an old superstition, naturally they were not going to test it out to their ultimate disadvantage.

With such thoughts in my mind I waited for Tom, and by the time he returned I was almost prepared for a negative answer. He slipped in as quietly as he had gone, and sat down.

"Well," he said, "I have found out something not much, but a clue. Utato didn't know, or pretended he didn't, and Huahine said he would have to consult an old native before he could speak-all of which I took to be a polite evasion of the issue. But finally Huahine returned and said the old native, whose name he refused to give me, had told him that the kings were one and all buried on Aga-kaouitai, or Sinister Island as the natives call it. He either could not or would not, however, tell me where on this island the cave lies, except that it is high up on some cliff.

'It's a funny thing about these natives," Tom went on with his whimsical smile, "that their secrets are so different from ours. They don't seem to mind in the least that everybody on the island knows all about their love-affairs, which are as the fish in the lagoon for numbers. But every once in a while they will make a secret out of something we tell the world, and then you can't pry it out of them!

"But about Huahine. I did manage to get one other thing though, by a sore of trick question, and that is this. The cliff on whose side 'they' are buried faces Manga Reva, and not the sea. This helps a lot, and there is one cliff higher than the rest on this side which may be the one.

"Utato told me that in his father's time some French official came from Papeete and that an old native revealed the secret to him. This official, it seems, had then gone in and had most, if not all, of the kings' graves opened, and had carried some things away, among them a skull belonging to one of the later kings. This skull was very curious and had mummified tattooed flesh still on it. They say it is now in the possession of a doctor in Papeete. Uato didn't know how much else the official found or took away, or in what condition he left the burial-place. No native will ever go near the place, especially since it has been violated.

"It's disappointing, Bob, when you have had a nice hunch like that to find you are not the first. But anyway we will be the second white men to see the place if we go I mean. You are still so American and energetic that I suppose you will want to be off to-morrow."

I laughed. "You've got me right this time," I answered. "Only it need not be to-morrow. Wednesday will be soon enough."

"Well," said Tom, 'I'll go with you to the place, but I won't guarantee to touch the kings when I get there. These islands are queer .... " And he wouldn't say any more.

Tom's girl Pindini had been left much land on the archipelago by the grandmother who had reared her. On Sinister Island she owned a considerable patch of coffee, and we decided that a visit to this coffee patch should be the official reason for our visit, as it seemed wiser to keep its real purport a secret.

There was, however, one native whom we wished to take with us. In the course of my stay on the island I had gained the friendship of one Rhini, a jolly self-possessed fellow with eyes in which natural poise and shrewdness were reflected. And this was not all. A strange gleam lay in his eyes, belying his brusk appearance of camaraderie, a gleam which meant a belief in the ancient magic of his ancestors. Descended from one of the high priests of the island, Rhini was reputed to "mix tricks" with Parquitala. Had not one of his neighbors, Old Vivo, heard one stormy night a carriage coming from the sea drive past his house and disappear in the direction of Rhini's *fare*? And, on looking out, had he not caught a glimpse of Parquitala himself? Well, Rhini looked kindly upon me after I had told him of my occult experiences, and of course after my meeting with Parquitala we were as good as blood brothers. Tom and I knew we could trust Rhini and told him tentatively our plans. He reacted heart and soul, and his eyes, with something of the same dark fire that smoldered in Queen Maraü's eyes, lighted with anticipation.

"I go with you," he said simply.

So we made preparations, packing blankets and boxing food-coffee, tinned butter (that effeminate luxury was for me), a few cans of beans, tinned herring and some rice. Breadfruit and taro grew on Sinister Island, and Tom took his spear along as fish were plentiful in the gay lagoons surrounding the island. We told our immediate neighbors that we were going on a coffee-picking expedition and to get a few pictures, the latter being my own excuse for going, and gathered at the wharf where Taaroa was waiting with his *potii*, or boat. Taaroa was to take us over, a matter of a few miles, and call for us on the third day. We could have gone in Tom's canoe, but had some baggage with us, so Taaroa's boat made it easier for all of us.

The sea smiled over the reef, and the lagoon through which we sailed was ablaze with undersea color. Never had the coral gardens at the foot of Mount Duff radiated such color before. In and out of amethyst coral trees glided tiny vermilion fishes. Great blue and emerald parrot-fish eyed us from deep cobalt caverns, and cuttlefish blinked from their secret fastnesses under rock coral of

yellow ochre.

Looking back at Manga Reva I felt again that sense of secrecy and loneliness which is matched only by the ghost haunted-Marquesas. But the Marquesas are topographically different, as they rise precipitously from the seas covered with jungle from their base to the summit, while the islands of the Gambier are covered with jungle at their base, but as the mountain slopes begin the trees stop and the summit is covered with tall *aeho* grass. Seen at a distance from the sea the brown of the *aeho* is not unlike that of the brown California hills in summer. During the pagan days, when the population was nine thousand or more, breadfruit trees grew to the tops of the mountains, but fires have swept the hills many times, and with the decrease of the population, no attention has been given to replanting. So in these days only an occasional breadfruit or lone palm tree rises above the *aeho*.

As we neared Aga-kaouitai, even in the full blaze of the tropical sun, it seemed sinister and irrevocably forgotten by men and their tides of circumstance. Taaroa cast anchor a short distance from the island. Tara-Vai and Sinister Island are separated by a shallow coral-blocked lagoon perhaps three-quarters of a mile wide, through which no pass is cut, and we wished to land inside the lagoon. So we settled down to wait till we should have the luck to sight a native of Tara-Vai. Nobody lives on Sinister Island.' We had not long to wait, for around a high rock, half a mile or so away, appeared a pirogue with a native who was out with his spear hunting fat parrot-fish. Taaroa yelled "*Haere mai!*" And soon a handsome elderly native appeared smiling, his loins girded about by a faded red and white scrap of a *pareu*. He piloted our supplies over to the shore and then came back for us.

We could easily have waded to shore, having perhaps a few yards of swimming in some of the coral pockets, but my enthusiasm for that way of approach was dampened by Taaroa's finger pointing to something-near the boat. Two dark brown triangular fins cut the water.

"Sharks!" said Taaroa briefly.

Tom added, "They are especially bad in this lagoon, Bob, so don't try swimming while we are here."

Tom, Rhini, Pindini, Nanon and I finally landed on the clean white shores of the kings' sinister island.

Back in the shadows of some pandanus trees lurked a little black and white dog of some mongrel extraction. "Left here by some natives," said Tom, "the poor thing's lonesome and tries to make friends but can not. He runs as soon as you try to get near him. I wonder who his friends are on the island. If he could talk I'll bet he could tell a pretty tale!"

We deposited our belongings in a palm-frond shack built by natives who had been, like ourselves, coffee-picking on the island and had built it as a shelter from the sudden tropical showers that sweep unheralded over the islands. Tom made a fire and Pindini started out to hunt for taro.

"We have plenty of oranges, if we haven't much else," said Tom, and

pointed to the largest orange trees I had ever seen. As large as oak trees these gargantuan oranges grew, simply loaded with fruit in its prime which dropped occasionally with a resounding smash. 'The only trouble with this liberal supply is that you have to climb the trees to get it. However there is another way." And cutting a long forked stick he held it up and with the forked end twisted a cluster of golden fruit off a branch and slowly lowered it to earth.

"Well, let's explore!" he said. So Rhini, Tom and I were off, leaving Pindini and her brother Nanon to prepare the noon *kai kai*, Pindini and Nanon being more or less ignorant of the real purpose of the trip.

We wound our way through the coffee which even in the broad daylight had spectral feeling, partly brought about by the green gloom within the thick grove, and partly by something else I couldn't explain. As we came out of the coffee growth Tom pointed to a pit, and near by a great flat rock which still showed that some care had been taken by a departed sculptor to shape its top into an odd saddle-like formation.

"The pit," said Rhini, following our eyes, "was the place the embalmers always threw the entrails of the kings they were preparing to embalm. The rock you see there," pointing to the saddle, "is the rock on which they laid the body while they were working on it. I don't know just how they embalmed a king, except that he was exposed to the sun for a long time and after that a quantity of cocoanut oil was applied to the body."

On we walked through fruit trees, some of which I had never seen before. A carpet of little red orchids spotted the ground, and the curious *papaya* tree, with its golden fruit half eaten by the birds or the rats, grew around us in clusters. As we neared the base of the high cliff which Tom felt was a likely place for our explorations, suddenly from behind us sounded a dismal and hollow groan. It broke out into a long mournful howling, and then abruptly stopped. My nerves were so tense in this exotic spot that I jumped. But Tom smiled.

"That, Bob, was the little cur we saw when we landed, and his howling seems to come from the spot where they mummified the kings. He is following us, but is too shy to come close. I wonder what disturbed him."

A kind of natural gallery slowly wound its way around the base of the great cliff, imperceptibly rising from the jungle like a staircase without steps. Evidently generation after generation of goats had found refuge here from the rains, as the natural roof, the projecting rocks overhead, protected the floor of the gallery from dampness. Centuries of goat deposit made a curious soft carpet, and the odor was pronounced but not unpleasant. We passed a narrow opening which led apparently down through the rocks into a kind of subterranean cave.

'Here," said Rhini, "the two children of Karikitea, one of the kings of Manga Reva, were concealed after their father's murder. Karikitea and Karikipanu ruled jointly as the twenty-eighth kings of Manga Reva. Karikipanu was an easy-going popular monarch with no particularly

outstanding characteristics, but Karikitea was remarkable because of an abnormal appetite for long pig. He had a habit, when wars were few and no victims forthcoming for the roasting ovens, of pointing out a likely youth from among his own subjects, one plump and well-favored, to his spearmen. The luckless victim was promptly dispatched-and the king feasted. The spearmen, as the king's warriors, shared in such unholy banquets and were therefore not averse to carrying out the king's orders.

"Karikitea became more and more voracious in his demands. The pot boiled more and more often. Finally the young men of the island, realizing that they must take action for their own self-preservation, conspired against him. One day they caught him alone without his spearmen near the mouth of the old war canal beside your house, Maniota, and killed him. An uprising occurred in which all of Karikitea's faction were killed, Karikipanu becoming the sole ruler of the Gambier.

"But his two children were saved. Their nurse, realizing how things were going with the father, hastily em barked for Sinister Island here and concealed the little prince and princess in that cave. She fed them secretly, and guarded her charges so well that she was able, after the reaction against their father's cruelty had subsided, to produce them, and the boy was then publicly acclaimed as the heir to the throne, Karikitea having been the older brother. This then was the melancholy hiding-place of Teoa and Toatua, son and daughter of Teakarikitea (to give him his full name, though we usually shorten it), the only cannibal king to eat his own subjects. They say that Karikitea, while he was of course entitled to royal burial, was laid in a spot separate from his ancestors."

In telling Rhini's story I have translated his curious Choctaw into intelligible English, but the effect of it, in that dreary place was depressing in the extreme. Still more depressing was the cave itself. It was not four feet high and extended back about fifteen feet. As I crept out of the dismal hole I realized that kings and their offspring had no easy time of it, even in the old cannibal days of the Gambier.

A crumbling, coral-blocked pile attracted Tom's attention. 'That," he said, "was surely a *maraë*"

"Yes," said Rhini, "that is what is left of Aga o Tane. Although it was a very small altar compared to that of Te-Keika on Manga Reva, yet it was listed as one of the nine major altars of the archipelago-before Laval destroyed them. This one you see was built entirely of coral, which was used only for the construction of the smallest altars. Coral, to our ancestors in the old times, had some religious virtue, some peculiar value, but what it was we no longer remember now that we are Christians." So said Rhini virtuously.

Tom started to investigate and without disturbing much dirt, most of which was the fine dry dust of the goat deposit, he brought to light a number of bones. Rhini, watching him, interpreted. "The high priests were always buried by their own altars, and: their gods with them," he said.

'Yes," murmured Tom, "but Laval tore up this one. It looks it! So there is nothing worth searching for now." But in spite of his words he went on digging, and in a moment he gave a yelp of excitement and began scrambling and digging into the dirt like a dog who has found a bone. Then he lifted up a piece of volcanic rock which had been shaped by blows into the form of a crude ax. These ancient stone implements are very rare now, and this was a real find. In a moment two more were brought to light. All three, judging from the crudeness of their shaping and the roughness of their edges, distinctly belonged to the Paleolithic Age.

"The ancients used these axes to kill the sacrifices, or to carve the *tiis*, or idols," said Rhini.

Further digging brought forth nothing more. Tom straightened up and said, 'I'm empty. Look at the sun. It is almost noon. Let's go back and get some *kai kai*"

Nanon had cut several banana leaves and laid them on the ground. On them lay a pile of steaming taro flanked by bowls of cocoanut milk mixed with sea-water. The taro is dipped into this primitive sauce before eating. There were also kippered herring, tinned butter and some hard biscuits-my own contribution to the feast-while piles of oranges and bananas made up the remainder of the menu.

Even in the middle of the day our camping-spot seemed strange to me. I was constantly expecting something to happen. The dim light that filtered through the coffee jungle gave an impression of being under the sea. However, we were all hungry and nobody said much till after the last orange had been devoured. Then Rhini begged a cigarette-we were getting close to the end of the tobacco supply by now-radiated pleasure and well-being and, adjusting his *pareu*, stretched himself on the ground.

'Do you remember Rhua's adventure in the coffee here?" he asked in the tone of voice with which one announces a story. The others had all heard it often, but the tale was for my benefit anyway, so Rhini proceeded undisturbed. Rhua came over in his canoe from Tara-Vai one fine day to see how the coffee was progressing, and incidentally to try fishing from this side of the lagoon. He left his canoe down on the sand and started up the bank here. He knew, or thought he knew, that there was not a soul on the island, since no canoes were on the beach. As he passed near the shack he heard a lot of people arguing somewhere in the coffee. Surprised he stopped to listen. The argument kept on, growing more and more heated as it progressed. The quarrelers were all talking at once so he had difficulty in understanding the words, but he supposed that some friends must have come over unbeknown to him and were having one of their interminable land disputes, and went into the coffee.

"The voices ceased as he entered. Three times he called, but received no answer. Then suddenly he heard voices all around him. And this time he realized, with a chill down his spine, that they were not talking in the dialect

of to-day but in the old Manga Revan language which has long been obsolete in its pure form. Several times in the midst of it he heard his own name. He thought he heard some one laugh. Louder grew the voices till they might have been talking in his ear, but no one appeared. In a lase desperate effort he called once more - and a chorus of cackling laughter followed his voice.

"Panic-stricken and trembling with fear he ran down to the beach, jumped into his canoe, and grabbing the paddle pushed off with all speed. As he slipped out into the lagoon he could still hear the sound of voices violently arguing in that forgotten tongue.

"That, Maniota, is *manihini*, or ghost talking, and this island is famous for that particular expression of the ghosts which haunt the place."

This is again the sense of Rhini's story. The sounds are my own. Alice in Wonderland so delightfully said, "Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves." In this case a Manga Revan Tahitian mixture, with a few French words thrown in, would make singular reading, so both the sounds and the sense require watching.

Pindini, Nanon and Tom then exchanged stories, usually all at the same time. The island it seemed, as Tom expressed it, was bad. Very bad. A native of Tara-Vai who had been in Tahiti for years had come back and laughed at local traditions. Against the advise of friends he always chose the cool recesses of the haunted coffee grove for his afternoon siesta wile on coffee-picking expeditions. But within a month he died of a strange disease.

"The old high priests mixed big medicine against those who visit Sinister Island," said Tom. "Now in the old days, before Laval came, people did live on this island. All through the coffee are pavements which you have seen. These are all that is left of the old houses. There are also four or five huge rocks,roughly shaped like tables, but what they were for nobody remembers. It is said that Laval felt the old pagan magic to be especially powerful on this island, and this is the only one of the group he ordered deserted. No native was allowed to approach the cliff any farther than the *maraë* where we found the knives this morning. If he did he was speared without question."

The afternoon had flowed swiftly. Much had been said that was not worth recording. The sunlight slowly slipped up the great orange trees in front of our little shack, above the coffee which looked even more spectral and awesome than before.

"To-morrow we'll leave early and spend the whole day hunting for the tombs," said Tom. "Now here's where I think they are!" He drew a rough map on the sand. "After we leave the altar where we were this morning we follow the trail around until it stops by great broken rocks. From here on, going is hard. Then we turn around on the side the cliff facing Manga Reva. This we must make early, as the tide is full at noon and the pockets between the rocks send up regular geysers. From here on we will have to look for clues."

The light all around us had grown dim. Only high up between the tops of the trees could we catch a glimpse of the high cliff, now orange in the sunset,

where we were to go in the morning.

Suddenly a strange song floated through the night air, a chorus with regular cadences, minor chords. It was repeated, followed by a long silence. Then one voice proceeded as though in prayer. I turned ice cold.

"My God, Tom!" I gasped, "what is that? I never heard anything like it."

"Nor ever will again, very likely," said Tom. "Look!" he went on, pointing up. High on the top of the cliff I could just see a number of tiny black spots. "Goats! Just goats. But the damned things always sing here on Sinister Island at sunset. See, the sun has set. They won't sing any more."

Goats singing - what a place! All the old beliefs of paganism crowded into my already overflowing reservoir, filled with new emotional experiences. They had sung too as though a meaning and strange purpose had actuated them. Goats singing a hymn to the sun, to the great Polynesian Pan!

"Oh, yes," said Tom, smiling that curious pained but whimsical smile of his. I should say that his lips smiled with a whimsical twist, but in his eyes lurked the pain. "This island is strange, very strange. The natives know. They know."

Next morning after coffee we were off for the cliff. We wound our way around the natural gallery we had explored the day before till we came to the end of the trail. As Tom had said it ended by some great broken rocks. We were here at some little distance above the shore, but it was impossible to go on any farther on this level, and we were obliged to scramble down to the lagoon side. Here passing was difficult. Either Rhini or Tom led the way and the one ahead would help the next fellow by pulling him up over the steep rocks near the edge of the water.

The whole base of the cliff facing Manga Reva was a contorted mass of strata, of rock just as it had been left by some ancient volcanic upheaval. Not in the whole of the Gambier were there such evidences of subterranean upheavals as were shown here on this side of Sinister Island. Evidently some ancient cataclysm-perhaps that which destroyed the lost continent of Mu-had submerged a great part of the Gambier, leaving only the highest peaks of her mountains above the water. And so in miniature the tragedy of Mu was repeated. Aga-kaouicai had evidently been part of Manga Reva, but in the course of the earthquake the land that had bridged the gap between them had sunk, and half the land now known as Sinister Island had been turned over on its side.

As we struggled on over the twisted and contorted rocks, which were at times as fantastic in shape as the dream of a Chinese artist, sometimes clinging like Alpine climbers and sometimes passing through natural door ways in the rock, I thought how appropriate a spot the old cannibal kings had chosen for their eternal vigil. Here, in what was left of a continent, what was left of kings should feel at home.

Tom was leading and looking in a puzzled way at the high cliff above us. Impassable the ascent, or so it seemed. It rose almost perpendicularly, covered

with jungle. Pandanus and *purau* scrambled up and up, their roots and branches so interlaced that progress looked impossible for us. However the trees stopped about half-way to the top and the *aeho* grass covered the sides of the mountain the rest of the way.

At last we met a little stretch of beach and paused there for a moment, undecided. Tom's gaze came down from the cliff and examined the shore. A little above the tide line his glance stopped. He went over to what seemed to me to be a line of rather uninteresting stones, half over-grown by the voracious jungle. As he prowled around he whistled suddenly.

"What's up?" I called, more to humor him than because I could see any interest in his find.

Rhini joined him and they peered at the rocks together. It was a moment before Tom answered. "This is the remains of a very ancient road," he said then slowly. "It started here at this scrap of beach, where a canoe could land, and turned along the face of the cliff. But where did it go to? There could never have been any plantations in this outlandish spot. And it couldn't have led to anything much farther on, because this rocky bench of shore ends abruptly in another hundred yards and the cliffs plunge directly into the lagoon. No, it couldn't go any farther, and I believe it ended right here where it seems to turn inshore and is lost.

"Bob!" His voice had grown higher and tauter. "Bob, this must have some connection with the kings. It can't be anything else. Over this road in the old days they brought the royal body, and right here is where they hoisted it up to its final resting-place. By Paraquitala! That must have been a job, hoisting it." He squared his shoulders and smiled. "Well, where a corpse can go, a live man can certainly follow!" He looked at the jungle above him, caught a pandanus root and began to hoist himself up, without another glance in my direction. "But here!" I called. "Hold on, old man! This is only the wildest guesswork. Those stones may be nothing of the kind, and I don't believe a cat could climb this jungle!"

But it did no good. Tom's voice floated down serenely, 'Come on. But don't look back."

Rhini had also disappeared upward like a somewhat clumsy monkey. There was nothing for it. I also called on Parquitala, and followed.

Let me not describe the ascent in too much detail. Even now the thought of it turns me a little giddy, and I am far from proud of the way I scrambled and slithered. Tom, when he saw how difficult it was for me, came over and stayed close to me. So we climbed together, painfully and stiffly pulling ourselves upward through the crazy forest.

Abruptly the trees stopped and the *aeho* grass began. "Now," said Tom, "lie flat on your belly and we'll wriggle our way up that goat-track there. This is safer, be cause if we catch the *aeho* at its roots it is strong enough to hold us if we start slipping." Slowly we squirmed up the goat-track, the tall dry *aeho* rising above us like a miniature forest. Pebbles and stones scratched me; a

centipede hastily wriggled out of the way; I thought the climb would never end. The dryness of the path and the grass, and the dust sucked up by our efforts, choked me.

Rhini had gone on ahead and was lost to view. At last I heard his voice calling jubilantly, "We're here!" One more effort and Tom and I too were standing with Rhini on a wide ledge which could not be seen from below because the grass, ten or twelve feet high, screened it. Even from Manga Reva across the way with a spy-glass nobody could have seen us.

The ledge was about a hundred feet long and seven or eight feet wide, something like a piece of uneven shelf road with a dip in the middle of it. The mountain here leaned dizzily at an angle over us instead of away from us. I sat down firmly to get my breath. The suspense how ever was too much for me. In a moment I was up again and starting down the ledge, Tom and Rhini beside me.

About twenty feet away from us was the dip of which I have spoken, where the ledge sank and then rose again. In the face of the cliff opposite the lowest part of this dip we saw the mouth of a cave. But even at our first glance we knew in what shape the French official had left it. He was a vandal, that man, and if I knew his name I'd blacken it by saying so! For spilling out of the mouth of the cave and partly filling the depression caused by the dip in the ledge was as untidy a heap of débris as I ever saw. It seemed chiefly to be composed of torn tapa cloth, great piles and bundles of it, torn and trampled and crumbled from its many years' exposure to the elements. And as we came closer we saw that the bones of the ancient monarchs were scattered among their cerements, mixed with broken fragments of coral, dirt and rotting wood. The bones were smooth and white and I saw no signs of mummified flesh on any of them. Evidently the embalming process could not stand against exposure to tropical rain and sun.

We stood on the ledge in the bright sunlight, shut in by the rock and the high grass to a sort of trench-like privacy, with the smell of dry grass and rotting cloth in our nostrils; and a sense of desolation came over me. This then was the end of grandeur. Rhini laid down the shovel and pick he had somehow managed to carry upward through the crazy jungle and adjusted his *pareu*.

"Here is the Cave of the Kings!" he said - and sat down upon his haunches, or rather his broad feet, immovable.

Tom shifted from one foot to the other. "Bob," he said, "I'm doing no digging. You see I live in these islands. You don't. And Rhini here, because of his belief in magic, has no fear. You and he will do the excavating if there is any to be done. But I'm afraid it's a thankless task. The Frenchman seems to have left in a hurry. I wonder what happened to him! They say all he brought back with him was a tattooed skull, hair earrings, a necklace of shark's teeth and some tapa. No gods. But nobody knows for sure." He lapsed into silence.

By this time I had collected myself and, not without a slightly eery

feeling, I stepped over the débris and into the Cave of the Kings. It was narrow and not very deep, but high enough to stand in, and it was if possible in a worse state of disorder than the ledge outside. Toward the back was a rather deep pit-like depression in the rock floor and in this the bodies of their majesties had evidently been deposited. Each king had been mummified in a folded position, the legs drawn under him and the arms across the chest, and then wrapped in layer after layer of fine tapa cloth till he was like a huge bundle. These bundles, so far as I could make out, had then been deposited three in a row in the bottom of the pit. The succeeding monarchs had simply been placed on top of their predecessors, and above each pile of kings a little shelter of wood had been erected. These last had rotted with time, and their remains added to the débris.

All this I made out after I had studied the ground a bit. At first I could see only the disturbance caused by the French official who had been before me. He had evidently carried the top, and more recent, bundles outside the cave, broken them open and taken what he wanted, throwing the bones where they fell. Then he had gone into the cave, opened a few more in the same fashion, and finally simply dug and scrambled among the older bones at the bottom of the pit. Some of the bones which lay in such confusion were almost ready to disintegrate at a touch. Others were comparatively sound.

I called Rhini, who came without objection, and we looked through the débris for a while, but found little more of interest, except for the rather curious fact that with each king, in addition to the tapa cloth, some sugar cane had been buried. Even the very oldest had with them almost entirely rotted bits of cane. This seems to bear out the contention that sugar-cane originally came from the South Seas.

Tom's voice interrupted us and I turned to see him in the cave's entrance, shaking his head. "No use to dig here," he said. "Come out of that musty stuff." I was convinced that he spoke the truth and came out gladly enough, to get a breath of to-day's air, after the dust of ancient kings and their trappings.

We wandered along the ledge. At one point an opening about six inches in height showed above the natural detritus of the mountain and the goat deposit, which here also was thick.

"Tom, that looks like another cave!"

"So it does, old man. Well, it's yours if you want it."

Rhini excitedly commenced to work at the débris with the pick, while I carried away with the shovel what he had dug out. Pretty soon a large opening was visible. More and more excited we dug, Tom watching, fascinated. Two hours went by. We had moved almost a ton of dirt.

At last the opening was big enough for me to crawl through into the cave. It was similar to the other one, but smaller. At first I could scarcely see in the semi-darkness, but as my eyes grew more accustomed to it I saw, half covered with dirt from the cave roof, a large bundle of tapa tied with cords made of cocoa fiber. To say that I was excited is to put it mildly. My hands could

scarcely untie the cords and the stiff tapa crackled as I worked. But at last it was done and the bundle unrolled.

Inside it was a skeleton-the skeleton of a very powerful man. The bones were disjointed, white and dry. In no place was there any sign of ligaments which might have tied them together. And it seemed to me that they occupied a smaller space in the tapa than had the bones of the other kings. The skull was perfectly clean and of a shape that delighted my painter's eye.

"Here, Tom," I said when I could control my voice enough to sound properly casual, "take these!" And I held up to him some of the bones. "I want to photograph his majesty, and it is too dark here. We'll have to put him on the ledge."

"I'll be darned if I'll touch them!" said he.

I turned to Rhini, but he seemed to have lost all his initiative.

"Well, there's nothing for it but for me to bring him up in relays." So I took my prize up piecemeal and made a composition of the bones. Just as I was about to snap him with my little camera Tom let out an unearthly yell.

"Karikitea!" he yelled, "this is Karikitea, the king who ate his own subjects. They say that he was buried in a separate place from the other kings. And they say too" - here Tom lowered his voice and looked cautiously about though what he expected to see I could not imagine "that in revenge for his fondness for long pig he was eaten by the winning faction before his bones were buried. That was a terrible desecration!"

When I had recovered a little from this, another thought occurred co me. "If that is so," I said, "perhaps they were not careful enough to pack up all his bones."

Being a painter I had studied anatomy pretty thoroughly, and I now set out to arrange the bones in proper order, returning to the cave with matches to be sure I had missed nothing. The bones were all perfectly preserved and as they had been wrapped together in the same bundle I felt sure none could have completely disintegrated. And sure enough, His Majesty was not complete. His lower jaw was missing and several bones of one hand.

"Karikitea it is!" I said - and I still think the judgment correct, though I doubt if I could prove it at law.

"Perhaps," said Tom when our excitement had cooled a trifle, "it is his *tupapau* which has been causing all the trouble on the island, for his lost dignity's sake."

"Maybe so," I assented. "But if that is so why can't we mend matters for him? Let's wrap him up after I snap him" - in the surprise of the discovery I had completely forgotten the picture for the moment - "and put him with the other kings. We will treat his bones tenderly. Rhini here, who is a high priest of sorts, can mix medicine over him. And perhaps we can help atone for the wreck the other man made of the graves. Karikitea's *tupapatu* can then rest in peace, as he has surely been punished enough."

I clicked the camera. Scarcely had I done so when from behind us, from

the tall *aeho* grass, quantities of fine stones or pebbles were thrown all about us. I jumped, and had an impression of something prowling behind the grass. There was a strange ugly smell like that of a very wet animal or something decayed. Yet it was an impossibility for anything to be walking behind the grass as the precipice fell almost sheerly about five hundred feet to the beach below us.

Tom and Rhini by now were rapidly losing control of themselves. For that matter so was I.

"Stone-throwing!" whispered Rhini, his dark face almost a shade lighter. "*Tupapau* he throw stones. I go!" And before we could say a word he had disappeared head foremost down the almost perpendicular goat-trade by which we had come.

Tom, though obviously jumpy, stood his ground. Curiously enough great clouds commenced to roll high over our heads. "Bob," burst out Tom, "get that damned skull back in the cave. I can't stand that grin of his!"

So I carefully gathered the once formidable Karikitea together, wrapped him up in his tapa and carried him to the cave of his ancestors. Since Rhini had deserted us we could not mix any medicine over him, but I did my white man's best and threw a little dirt over him with a vague remembrance of the burial service.

Then Tom and I gathered up the pick and shovel which Rhini had abandoned and made for the goat-rack. The storm hit us just as we started down. A great rock fell - we heard it as we descended - and, slipping and sliding, down we went. Never could an elevator have dropped five hundred feet more quickly than we did. At the bottom Rhini was waiting under a *purau* tree, for the rain was a deluge by now.

"*Miti te haere mai!* (The sea is coming in!)" said Rhini, and sure enough it was. The wind had lashed the incoming tide to fury. We had to dodge the surges and wait for their ebb as we clambered in and out, up and over great volcanic rocks. And the rain! A real tropical downpour it was, like a young cloudburst. Soaked to the skin and plastered with wet clay and sand, we finally reached the sheltered gallery where Tom had found the axes the day before on the site of the ruined altar.

As we pressed through the dripping *aeho*, there before us on the dry ledge rested a herd of wild goats. We had heard them on our way up the trail, baaing and fussing over the weather like a lot of peevish old men. The wind and rain had kept them now from sensing our nearness. The old patriarch of the flock, a long yellow- and black-haired creature who looked like one of the more favored imps of his majesty the devil, with his wicked impersonal eyes, his curled horns and his long beard which almost trailed the ground, was the first to see us. Instantly he gave the alarm. Away the flock sped. In a twinkling of the eye the last impertinent tail and gleaming hoof were lost amid the sheets of rain which still poured from the heavens. That flock of fleeting goats, etched on the fall ing rain as on a sheet of molten glass, was an impression I

shall never forget. Faintly through the months that have passed echo too their cries.

We were soon trailing dejectedly through the coffee and so reached at last the little palm-thatched shack. Our dejection must have been amusingly obvious for Pindini and Nanon burst out in unrestrained glee over our appearance. But a dry *pareu* and a cup of native coffee laced, as Tom expressed it, with cocoanut milk soon set us to rights again.

Looking anxiously at the sky Rhini observed that Taaroa would scarcely put out in such weather, and that we would better make ourselves as comfortable as might be for another night. The next day the storm if anything was worse. Tom went out and speared a big parrot-fish which we ate for dinner. Food was running low as we had planned to stay only two days. However this was far from fatal as there was plenty of taro and breadfruit on the island and, provided the lagoon was not too rough, Tom could always bring in a fish. But Rhini had under-estimated the storm. We did not see Taaroa and his *potii* till the fifth day, by which time we were thoroughly wet and tired, and swore we would never come there again.

We spent our time, like the Canterbury pilgrims, beguiling ourselves with legends and stories of the old days in Polynesia, ghost stories and strange tales of magic that had been wrought by the great high priests.

According to the natives it was the spirits or *tupapaus* of the old magicians or high priests which made the most powerful occult manifestations on the islands. They were, so said Rhini, far more powerful about fifty years ago, their power, according to his tales, seeming to lessen with each succeeding year. Many and dark it seems were the ancient practises. Most of these are known to all Polynesian students, and through Somerset Maugham and Frederick O'Brien the quality of their witchcraft and its results have reached a far wider audience. I do not need to speak here of such well-known phenomena as walking on hot stones and killing enemies by suggestion.

It was on our last evening on Sinister Island that Rhini produced the story which gave the final fillip to our strange expedition.

"The most powerful god in the Gambier," said he - I am translating again - "was not made of coral or of wood, but entirely of cords, cords like those woven from cocoanut fiber which we saw wrapped around the great bundles which were now the kings. One of the stories connected with the 'Thing made from cords' had to do with Laval and his assistant.

"It seems that Iakopo, the great force the Spanish intruders to a show-down some time before the final capitulation of Maputeoa, at a magic ceremony on Tara-Vai held beneath the giant banyan trees. He invited the foreign priests to the island to watch certain things which he was to do, on the anniversary of Tupa's arrival on the islands. "And," said Rhini slyly, "I have been told also that he politely suggested that an opportunity would be given Laval to match his tricks against those of the ancient magic. But the European refused, and so the ceremony was scheduled to go on with out them.

"During the course of the evening men came before Iakopo bearing a bundle which they handled with great care. The bundle, bulky and wrapped in old tapa, was carefully laid down before the high priest who treated it with all the customary gestures the ancient natives paid to royalty or the gods. They then produced another object which looked like a small, crudely made tent, also of tapa cloth and stretched over a framework.

"Iakopo, after various incantations to Tu and others in the hierarchy of the old gods, and amid the furious beating of drums, slowly unwrapped the package of tapa. As it unrolled before his hands a skeleton was disclosed. To this Iakopo again paid the homage due to a king of the Gambier. He then slowly lifted the tent made of tapa and there in the firelight appeared an arrangement of cords that had a crude geometric resemblance to a *tii*. For arms it had preternaturally long cords and its head was made of interlaced cords, as was its body.

"At the command of the high priest the drums stopped. He leaned over and apparently whispered to the Thing, whereupon a most curious transformation took place. Slowly the long arms of cocoanut fiber began to move. As they moved the drums again commenced to roll ominously with a hypnotic repetition in the beat. Slowly the 'Thing made with cords' reached over and with its arms picked up one by one the bones which had been placed directly before it-and played with them!"

Here Rhini shivered a bit, and as for me the chills ran down my spine.

""This we know," he continued more calmly, "from Laval himself. It seems the two priests, although they had refused to attend the ceremony officially, had nevertheless wished to see what went on. They had accordingly had themselves hidden by a faithful native at some distance from the scene but with a good view of the proceedings. And they have left a record of what they saw.

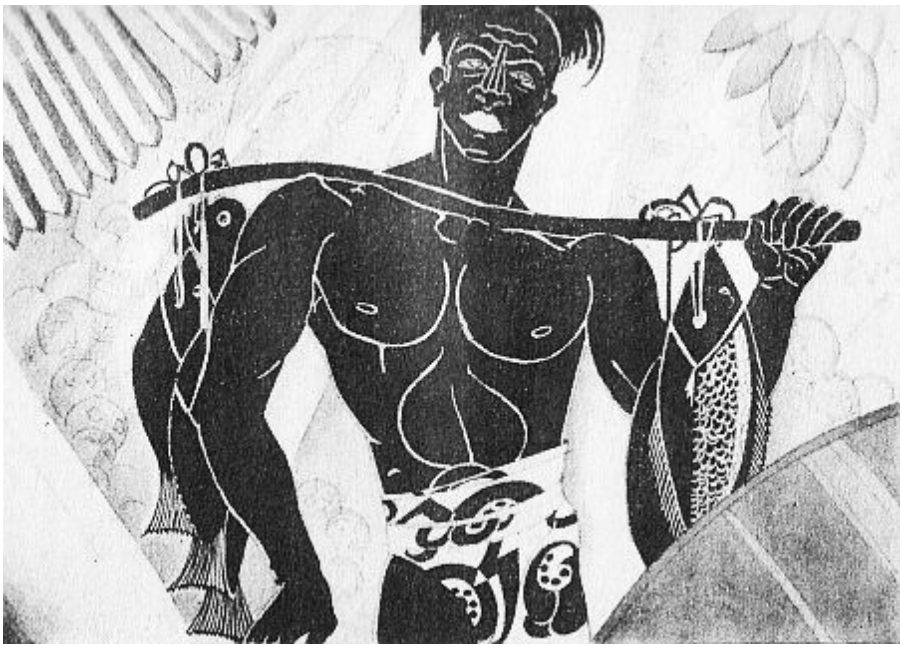
"When the Thing had ceased playing with the bones the arms still writhed like those of an octopus, and kept pointing in the direction of the priests' hiding-place. Iakopo, accompanied by his acolytes, following the direction pointed out to them by the Thing, came to the tree where Laval and his assistant were hiding and discovered them.

"Laval, it is said, admitted Iakopo's cleverness and the power of his primitive magic, and the high priest seems to have rested on that admission. It would have been better for him had he ordered Laval killed on the spot.

"Of the rest of the ceremony Laval has left no records, since he was ordered away, but my father," said Rhini, "who was a priest, has told me what happened on these occasions. During the magic ceremonies all people suspected of theft, murder or any other crime, were drawn up in a line. Then Iakopo passed down in front of this line bearing the Thing in his arms. If any of them were really guilty the thing would reach out its long thin arms and touch the culprit, who always broke down then and confessed his crime."

"And the bones, what of the bones?" said I.

Rhini answered and said, "I ran away to-day when you unwrapped the tapa, for then I recognized, according to descriptions of my father, the bones used in the magic ceremony, the bones with which the Thing played-and they were those of Karikitea!"



Then suddenly he heard voices all around him

Slowly the "Thing made with cords" picked up, one by one, the bones and played with them

EPILOGUE

EARLY seven months had passed and no boat had touched Manga Reva save one, and that the *Vahine Tahiti*, one of Pedro's boats that had saved us at the time of the tobacco famine. It arrived too soon after my installation in Marianne's plum-colored *fare* near the abandoned war canal to tempt one. One morning in November the village soothsayer reported that a ship would arrive *"Anan hai'* to-morrow. Next day at noon the faint cry of "*Potii, Potii*! (Boat, boat!)" echoed from the mountaintop. Two hours later a sailing schooner slowly glided around the base of Mount Duff, looking like the tiny stage boat in a performance of *Peer Gynt* that I had seen years before in Paris.

As soon as the cry "*Potii*!" had sounded through the village all my neighbors ran home to put on their best clothes in anticipation of the great event. Tiare was there on the wharf in a voluminous Mother Hubbard, spotted with ungainly red roses; Pindini in a white lace dress, relic of the voyage to Papeete where she had first met Tom. Mama Po was swathed in yards of black calico, made of course after the fashion of a Victorian night dress. This she held up coquettishly on one side. A straw hat with a floppy and almost endless brim shaded her dusky fat face. Utato wore a striped collarless shirt and a pair of spotlessly clean bluejeans. The first impression that all this grandeur created was that of Sunday morning.

As the boat anchored some distance from the wharf, because of the coral pockets, Doctor Dezoteur came down the road in full uniform, wearing his medals and his military cap with its red and gold band. With him came Monsieur Fontana and the village policeman gay in his uniform.

The doctor invited me to go with him on his official visit to the boat, a sign of my social status, as no one was permitted on the boat until after the governor's visit. This was a coveted honor, as one then had first chance at the stores of cigarettes, sugar and such tinned luxuries as the boat carried.

Every trading schooner that touches these isolated islands in the South Seas creates all the furor among the dusky inhabitants that did the show-boat in the old days along the banks of the Mississippi. All the gossip of that alluring metropolis, Papeete, is carried by the sailors from island to island. The sugar, tobacco, rice, matches and gay dress-goods that form part of the

stock of this floating general store are after months of deprivation seized upon by the whole village, from the governor down to the smallest boy on the beach.

Then, too, it carries the mails, and when you have no seen letters for five months you grow hysterical at the sight of bags of letters.

We went on board the schooner, which I recognized as the *Tahitien* owned by the Maxwell Company of Papeete. She had been leased by young Yen, son of a rich Chinese trader at Papeete, as a trading vessel. Her cargo was overflowing with copra, which even spilled over into the one cabin in which the few bunks were located.

Young Ah Yen, when I asked him if he would take me with him to Tahiti, said: "Yes, come along. You can have Ah Fu's bunk. (Where Ah Fu slept after that I never could rightly discover unless it were on a pile of copra in the back.) We go back straight from Manga Reva to Papeete, as we picked up all the copra the boat can hold in the Austral Islands."

When I was landed back on shore with my pockets full of cigarettes, I hunted up Tom. Excited as I was about going, I found it difficult to tell him that I was leaving. Finally I came out with it: 'I'm going back on the *Tahitien*, Tom."

There was a moment's silence, then running his lean hands through his black hair, just streaked with gray, he said: "Yes, I suppose you must be going, Bob, but it's going to be tough to see you go." Wistfully he paused. "The diving season starts in a few days. You don't think you would like to stay for i?"

I hesitated and searched for words. It was one of those moments when words were heavy, clumsy and unsympathetic. "Yes, old man, I've got to go, because I know if I don't go now I never will. I'm slipping."

"Yes, Bob, I once let the boat slip by that I had planned to take. I packed up everything and when I was about to jump into the canoe that was to take me out to the schooner, I looked back: the lonesome mountains, the jungle, the deserted houses, and standing motionless near by Utato and Pindini without expression on their faces. The natives dread showing emotion in public. Suddenly I turned and walked back to the house. And I have never cared since to take any boat that anchored. I hoped maybe---?"

"No, Tom. I have to go. I don't want to and it's hurting worse than an abscessed tooth, the thought of going, but I've got to do it or I never will."

"Well, I'll help you pack, and Pindini will send you over some *kai kai* as you won't have time to cook."

And then I said good-by to Père Feria. I saw him before I entered his garden. There he was sitting at a table in his sparsely furnished stone house. He knew what I had intended to tell him. "But you must come back, Robert. You do good work here, and we all like you." His faded blue eyes were the color of aquamarines, and his life of sacrifice had lent his thin face an expression of inward ecstasy I had seen only on the Da Vinci Saints in the

Ufzi.

"I promise to come back, Père Feria."

"Now, remember you have made a promise, Robert. *Je vos attendrai*."

We walked slowly together out through the neglected garden. At the gate we parted. High above us towered Laval's cathedral. Was it all a dream: this strange old man with the face of a saint, this great structure forgotten on a Pacific island?

Doctor Dezoteur and Madame, little Jackie, the baby, and the six-year-old heir apparent as we called their oldest boy - I said good-by to them and all the others, one by one.

The final night in my *fare* was a curious one. Every thing was in disorder: paintings packed and the general wreckage of my home piled up ready for distribution to my friends on the morrow. When I had arrived Pépé - Yo's mother had in the course of her call suddenly caught sight of a florid cotton blanket that adorned my mattress on the floor - my closest approach to a divan. 'Now, I want that when you go," said she thriftily. Even down to my dishpan, every article in the house had been spoken for. Of course Pépé did not consider the lovely yellow pearl she gave me of much value, or the delicious dishes which she often sent over when I was too lazy to prepare a meal.

I finally went to bed that last night in Manga Reva tired and exhausted. The lamp burned low, and Soniosa prepared her bed at the farthest end of the room from me. The door was of course locked, as I was as superstitious by then as stupid Tiare, and a lighted lamp is a great protecion from wandering *tupapaus*. Soniosa curled up in a little *ni' au* basket, made from palm-leaf fronds, looked over the edge of the basket with her fox-terrier nose and eyes that had been bequeathed by some dachshund grand father, winked good night, then withdrew her little head into the basket and, like a turtle, was bidden from sight.

I had been asleep I suppose for hours when I heard, seemingly from far-off, Soniosa whimper and then whine very faintly. Half conscious, I realized that she was creeping across the floor of the room, frightened half to death. So low was her whimpering that I grew alarmed. If any one approached the house at night she would wake me up with ferocious barks all out of proportion to so small a dog.

She tried to creep on to my bed, absolutely *verboten*, for my lovely Soniosa had fleas. Suddenly I awoke and sat up in bed. There at the foot of the bed and between it and the light was an enormous black dog. My hair rose at the sight, for I thought it might be one of the savage breed that belonged to the Chinaman down near Tane Smith's *fare*. No pleasant customers, those at night. It never entered my confused mind how the dog had got into the house. As I started toward it, my hair did indeed stand on end, for it slowly arose from the floor and disappeared like smoke from a dying fire.

Next day when I was drinking my morning coffee with Tom and Pindini I

told my story. Pindini turned gray and Tom's eyes grew larger.

"Why, Bob, the *Ure ere ere* came to say good-by last night. That was the Black Dog of Manga Reva. You know, old Taaroa says he saved him one dark night as he was coming over the hill above Taku from the attack of a terrible demon in the form of a fierce white dog, which rushed at him. From the shadows came a great black dog with eyes of fire, trotting in the air above the ground. At sight of this apparition the white dog fled. The black dog, so said Taaroa, looked up at him, wagged his tail and, leaping high in the air, vanished into the night. That, Bob, is the *Ure ere ere* the Black Dog of Manga Reva. Huahine says he was once a great magician and his own name was famous in the annals of Manga Reva magic. His *tupapau* is good - never brings bad luck - in fact, he seems second in power to Parquitala. So he just came to say good-by-that means you must come back."

Tom and I looked over my belongings which I divided between Pépé and Pindini. I had accumulated quite a pile of razor blades during my seven months' stay, and happening to see them, I turned to Tom and said:

"What will I do with them?"

"Give them to me," said Tom, "and watch the fun."

Gathering them together, he stepped out on the veranda which was crowded with all the small boys in the neighborhood. Their small sisters in various states of disarray were shyly hanging around the porch, trying to peep over the top of the floor.

"Here," said Tom in Manga Revan, "catch these," and threw the blades out into the yard. Scarcely had they touched the ground than all the boys and girls in the yard were scrambling over one another for the blades. I shut my eyes, expecting to see blood dripping all over the ground. But somehow they all came out whole. However, one or two little naked amber tots were weeping as though their hearts would break. They had not been so lucky as the others in the scramble. I reached into my pocket and, finding a couple of fifty-centime pieces, threw them to the babies. Smiles spread where there had been tears and everybody was happy.

Yo piled all the pots and pans, cans of spoiled tomatoes, a great delicacy I discovered among my native friends, into his pirogue and rowed with his treasure over to Akamaru where Pépé, who was the official school mistress of the island, was now installed for the winter.

And then my friends all gathered on the wharf: Pin dini, TY-Ti, Yo, Nanon, Uato, Tom and all my neighbors. Pindini and Ti-Ti turned their backs as I waved good-by. I felt suddenly very funny inside, and when Soniosa tried to jump into the rowboat that was to take me to the *Tahitien* I just couldn't help blinking fast.

I climbed on board the *Tahitien*, over crates of unhappy chickens, and stumbled over ropes to which goats and pigs had been tied, our meals for the voyage. Feeling very unhappy, I turned around to see my beloved city of Rikitea receding from us like a dream. The *purau* tree that shielded the plum-

colored *fare* slowly became smaller. A white figure stood at the end of the wharf near the Protestant church. That I knew was Tom, and back on the shore Ti-Ti and Pindini were, I knew, still watching us.

We circled the base of Mount Duff, slowly passed Sinister Island, Tara-Vai. And now we were going out of the pass. Captain Mathas, Pindini's uncle, called for all sails to be unfurled.

The swell of the ocean gently lifted us up and down as we left the pass. Behind us the peaks of Manga Reva disappeared into the horizon.

THE END